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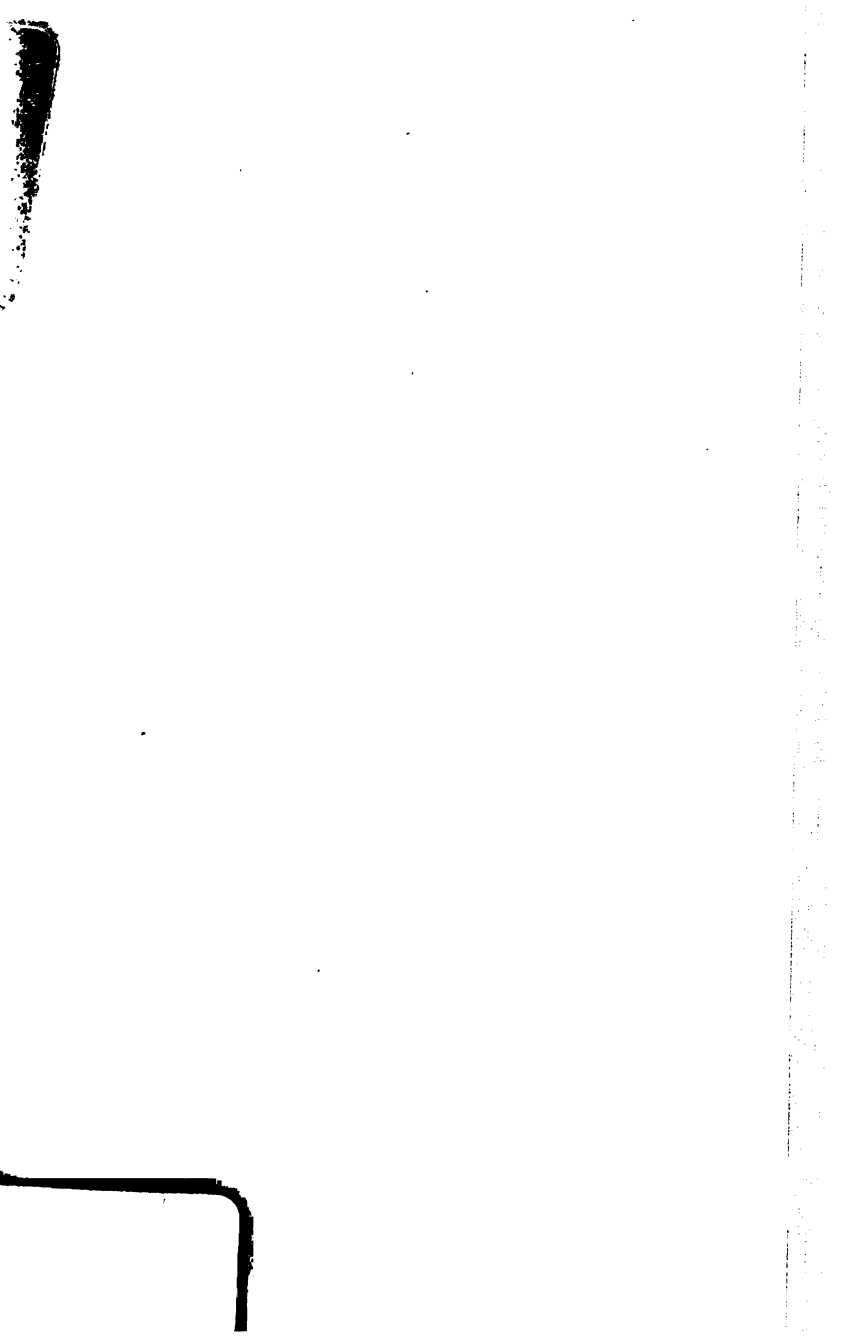
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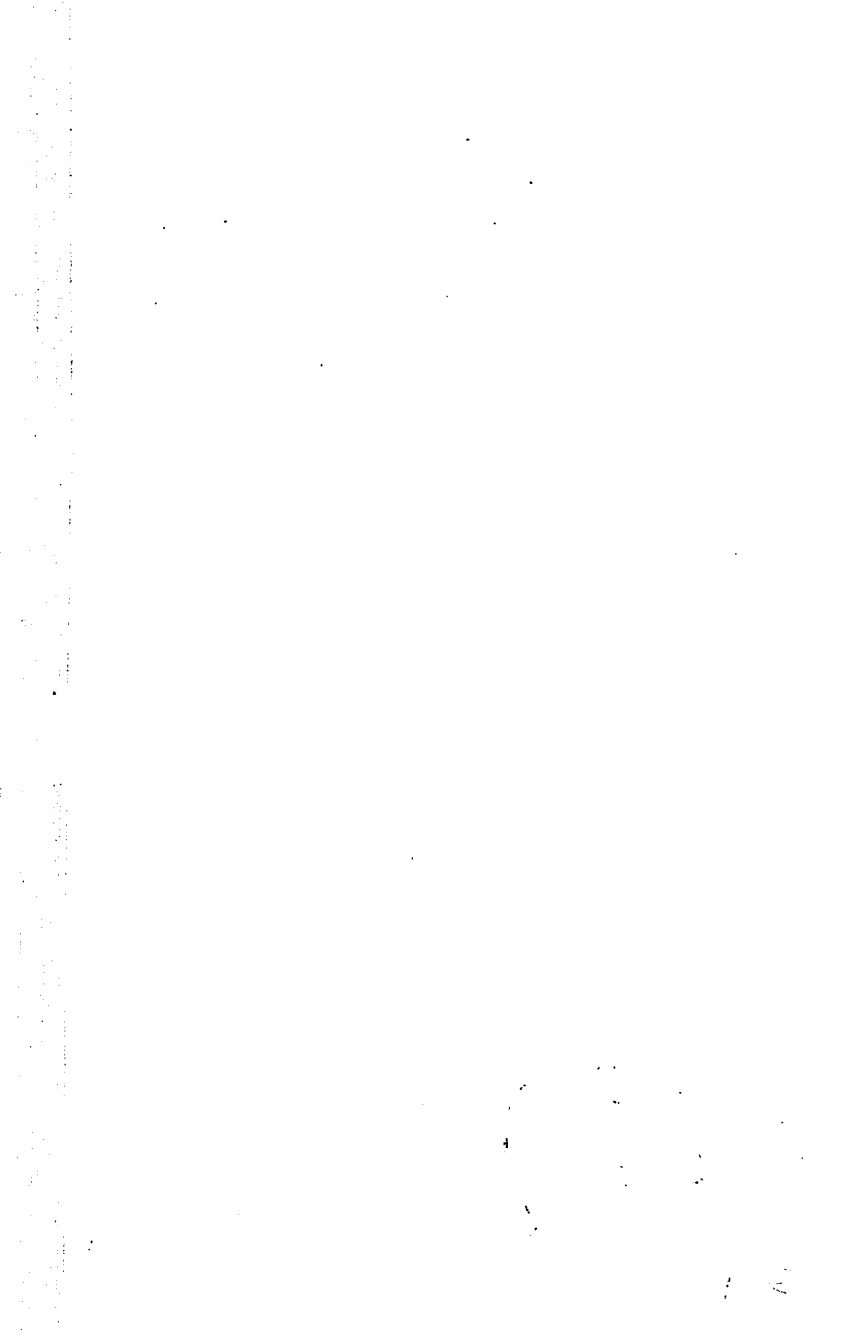
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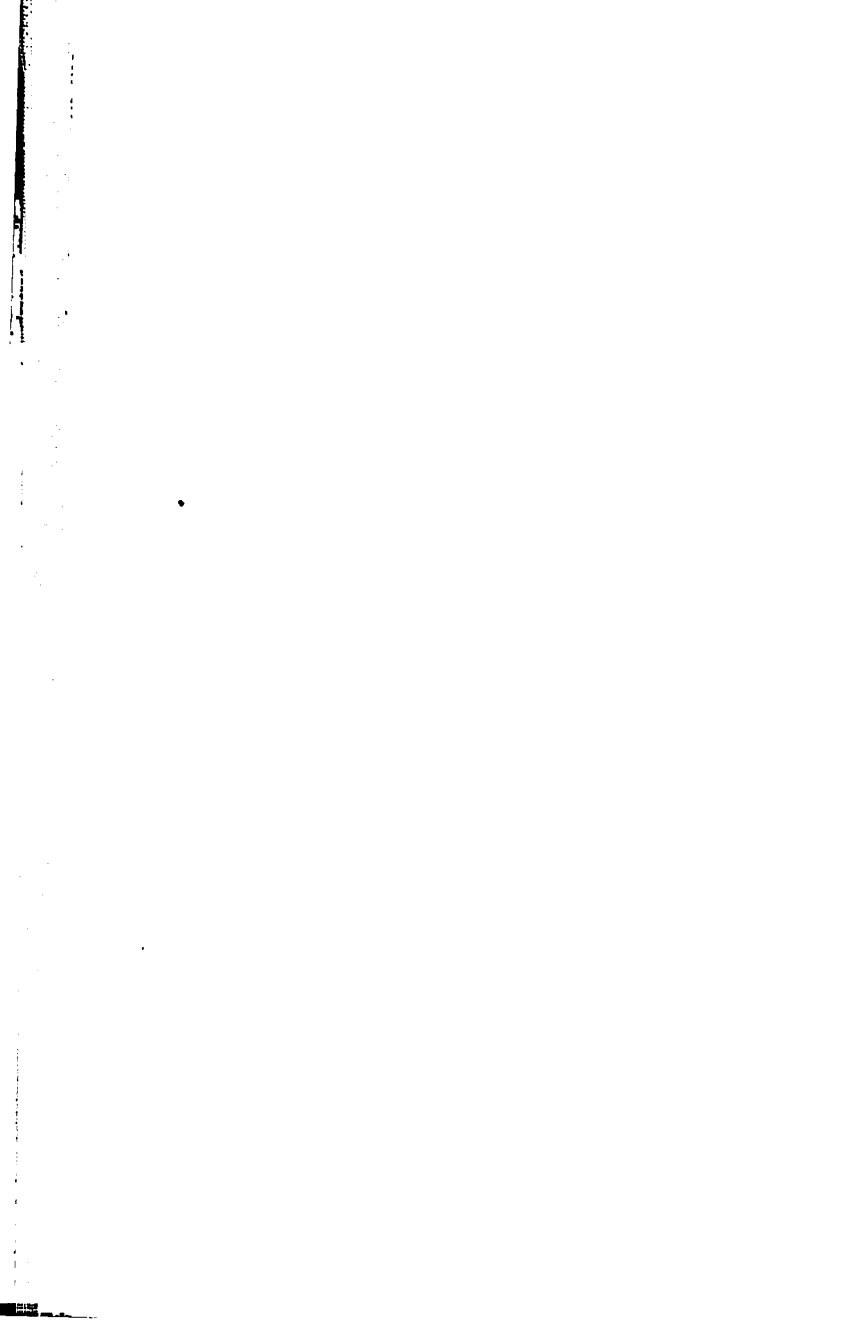
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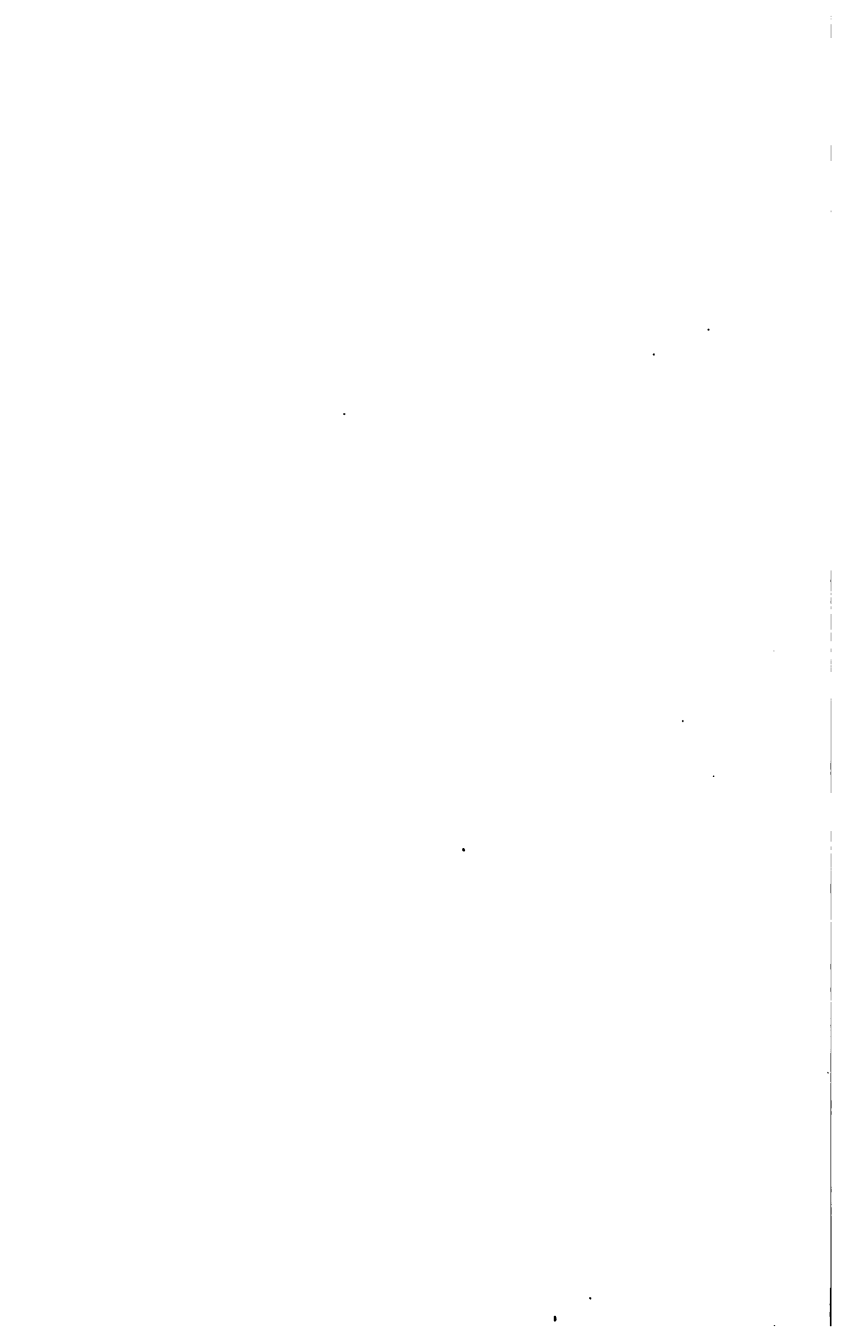


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LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

OF

LONDON LIFE.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"LOST SIR MASSINGBERD,"

"THE CLYFFARDS OF CLYFFE," "MIRK ABBEY,"

&c. &c.

James Payn

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II

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PART II.

(CONTINUED.)

VOL. II.

B

CHAPTER VII.

A NOMINATION.

LONDON, at this present writing,* is no longer a sombre city. From eastern Tottenham to western Turnham Green, there is no such thing as a dead wall. There is almost no such thing as a blank space. If the bill-posters could only devise a scheme for placarding the sky with *Vote for Smith*, they would do it. As it is, Amphion-like, he has compelled, with his sweet piping (or by means of some other piper whom he has had to pay), the very milestones to declare his eligibility to sit in Parliament ; nay, he has set every tree in Westminster (and especially the juniper-tree)

* July 11, 1865.

dancing to his (Conservative) measures ; and made the very lamp-posts vocal, or, at all events, instrumental to his cause. Nor is it Smith alone who has made all things metropolitan so gay and lively. There are half a hundred other candidates who have decked our public walls and hired our public steeds, and proclaimed that to the vacant seat 'tis he alone succeeds. Their individual confidence, considering that there *is* a contest, is something sublime ; and they express it in the largest type, and in all the colours of the rainbow. One can scarcely procure a cab that does not present the appearance of a car of victory, gorgeous as a slashed doublet with scarlet and yellow and blue, and audacious with printed puffery, as though there were no such proverb as *litera scripta manet* —“your placard remains, though the election has gone against you.” However, a modest man, like myself, has this set-off, that he can go from one end of London to the other without paying for his vehicle, by merely whispering, “Mr. So-and-so’s committee-room,” taking care to use the name of

the gentleman in whose parliamentary service the cab has been (very obviously) engaged.

To one, indeed, who is not himself a candidate, a contested election in his own borough is in some respects advantageous, quite independent of any hard cash which he may reconcile it with his conscience to pocket in exchange for his vote. I am called upon, for instance, as an inhabitant of Westminster, by the Hon. Captain Grosvenor, who is pleasant and affable enough, and very much more so when I tell him that I am a Liberal; also by certain partisans of Mr. John Stuart Mill, the philosopher, whom, I confess, I should like to have tackled personally upon his views about population—for although I have considerably over the quantity of children permitted by *his* principles, I don't consider myself an abandoned character on that account; moreover, he would allow our wives the exercise of the franchise, whereas it is my opinion that they have quite sufficient influence in the house already; but his partisans, in the philosopher's absence, explain

everything to my complete satisfaction, and depart with the promise of my unconditional support. Finally, comes Mr. W. H. Smith, a very agreeable canvasser indeed, and we, too, part with genuine expressions of the most cordial good-will, for I have explained to him that, although a Liberal, I will not do violence to my feelings by voting *against* him.

The simple fact is, although none of them know it, that I have not taken the trouble to get myself registered, and have therefore no vote to give! Under these circumstances, I have surely a right to consider myself totally unprejudiced, and to take to the hustings in Covent Garden, upon the nomination-day, whichever candidate's cab happens to come first, as his supporter and well-wisher. And this I accordingly do. As I pass rapidly along, the placarded walls make me almost giddy with colour; they give me, so to speak, "the chromatics." Now all is blue with me, now yellow, now pink. For a few moments a fashionable hearse, with eight mourning-coaches, which, won-

derful to say, the bill-posters have not taken advantage of, relieve my eyes, but immediately afterwards there come two omnibuses, each like a sunset in the tropics. *Lord Fermoy, for Marylebone*, in the colours of his native Erin; the "tried member," Mr. Harvey Lewis, in crimson; the "resident candidate," Mr. T. Chambers, in mauve. The 'bus proprietors are above consideration of party, and let their space to all advertisers, no matter what their—Yes, there goes Baron Rothschild in white and scarlet, and atop of a Citizen.* Nay, the very water-carts demand (with tears) my vote and interest.

At last I reach Covent Garden, where very little business, except electioneering, I should think, to judge by the enormous crowd, can be done to-day; even pine-apple is sacrificed to politics, and, so far as purchasers are concerned, the claims of shaddock to being the Forbidden Fruit are incontest-

* A placard, and not the Baron himself—a *Citizen* omnibus, not a free and independent elector—are here spoken of.

able. A single exception is made in favour of cherries, with half a pound of which, everybody who had threepence in his pocket (albiet such capitalists are not numerous), seems to have provided himself. Being (by comparison) a person of property, I buy a whole pound of bigarons, intending to reserve what I cannot eat as a present to my wife and family. By tremendous efforts, I manage to make my way through the press to one of the iron posts immediately in front of the hustings, but the stone step on which it stands is already in possession of four persons, and four more are holding on to these. It is a desirable coign of vantage, not only from the extra three inches of height it confers upon one's stature, but because it defends one from the "rushes" to which the Great Unwashed are so addicted in times of pressure. Now, to attain the post itself is as difficult as to be returned for Westminster; but by the exercise of great discretion, assisted by a naturally agreeable address, I manage to get on sufficiently good terms with one of the hangers-on

to permit me to offer him a shilling without offence; in return for this, he vacates, in my favour, his—well, his semi-foothold, and the privilege he has hitherto enjoyed of clinging with both hands to an individual connected with the manufacture of gas. Yes, if his *métier*, or *metre*, as I have heard it pronounced, was not gasfitting, then was his appearance, and still more the atmosphere that surrounded him as with a halo, deceptive in the extreme. From constant application to his profession, he seemed to have become himself Gaseous—gas oozed so from every pore. I am doubtful whether it did not circulate in his veins like blood, and I positively trembled whenever a pipe was lit in our neighbourhood, lest a spark should fall upon this gentleman, and make one great jet of him, and therefore of me.

At first, all the gas in his body seemed to revolt at my succession to the place of one who seemed to have been his friend; but taking care to hold him firmly by the throat with one hand, I offered him about a hundred cherries with the other, and

straightway he was appeased, and spoke me fair. "Don't you mind throttling of me," said he; "and don't you put your nice gloves on to that there post, for its black-greased." The good man warned me with reason, for the police, or somebody, had, with refined malignity, anointed—above a certain height—every pillar with engine-grease, to prevent the people swarming up them. But they swarmed everywhere else. Elevated as I now was, I could mark the sea of upturned faces paving both street and market, and watch, in comparative safety, the great human waves—the "rollers" of the roughs—come rushing in upon the hustings, there to be broken and repelled by a strong breakwater of police. There were women, with children in arms, amid this dangerous turmoil—women to whom, I should think, Mr. Mill himself would deny the possession of deliberative wisdom—as well as several poor cripples, who had certainly no need of their crutches there, and even one or two blind men come "to see the fun." Beside the "rushes" with which the rabble recreated themselves while wait-

ing for the candidates of their choice, infinite amusement was created by the throwing about of market-produce, such as cabbages and green stuff. An enormous packet of mint, I thus gratuitously received, was of infinite service, for, stuck between me and my new friend, it afforded me olfactory refreshment under circumstances of the greatest exigency.

By the conversation of those immediately about me I was more astonished than edified. The general opinion seemed to be that it was Mr. *E. T.* Smith—so familiar to the public in connection with the “Adorable Menken” who was soliciting the suffrages of Westminster; and that the name of the philosopher, his opponent, was Mr. Mills. A few were even so misguided as to imagine that “Scott, Champion Bill-poster,” so conspicuously placarded over the hustings, referred to some fourth aspirant for senatorial honours, whose address had not yet been issued. There were enough of the better-informed, however, to maintain a brisk controversy upon all these topics.

I will not repeat the private scandals—for the most part monstrous and improbable enough—that were retailed concerning the rival candidates; but it struck me, as I listened with hair on end, that, with the exception of being placed in the witness-box, and cross-examined by counsel, no situation could be more trying, to any gentleman conscious of having committed a peccadillo, than that of standing for a constituency. Nor were these scandals told only behind their backs. No sooner did the Three for whom we waited take up their position with their friends at that bar of public opinion, the hustings, than the *vox populi* began its accusations. The Man of Fashion, the Philosopher, and the Man of Business (who, by-the-by, is also a thorough gentleman), were each greeted in turn with a piece of the popular mind. Not that they were at first individually recognised. On the contrary, the high-bailiff was for some time the man whom the mob was resolutely determined should know what they thought of him. Then the proposers and the seconders were mixed

up with their principals, and the principals with one another; so that Mr. John Stuart Mill was confidently pointed out to me as a young gentleman of fashion just come of age, and Captain Grosvenor as the great political thinker of the period.

Unquestionably, the two Liberal candidates had least fair-play shewn to them. The mob would listen to no word from either. Captain Grosvenor "stuck to them," as my gasman observed (and I was quite in a position to appreciate the force of the expression), for more than half an hour, but only a select circle of reporters immediately beneath him could catch one syllable. Then came the turn of John Stuart Mill. It was the strangest sight to see that calm and philosophic face regarding the tossing throng. There was not a trace of contempt or even annoyance in his features, but certainly I never saw a man more out of place in a nomination-booth. The sense of humour is wanting in that deep-thinking and powerful mind, or else he was pained at the indecorous behaviour of

those to whom, without exception, he is ready to intrust the right of franchise. For my own part, who am not a philosopher, I make my mind up, as I listen in vain for his words of wisdom, never to go through such an ordeal, however "solicited" by committees, while unpaid parliaments exist; nay, think I, not for a peerage—unless there is a pension added—would I ask for such sweet voices as these. I feel like Caius of Corioli as I clasp my mint nearer to my nose.

Mr. W. H. Smith has a little better fortune with these gentry. The Liberals are not so numerous as their rivals, and have to invent a new kind of groan—a prolonged low bellow; such as we hear in the Zoological Gardens at feeding time—in order to make up for their inferiority in volume of sound. In intervals of this agreeable monotone, two or three words of the Conservative candidate crop up, like hyphens. Altogether, I am not impressed with the desirability of Nominations; I almost think it a pity that they can't be made private—as it is proposed to do with executions. But then I

have not yet seen the show of hands. This is really very interesting, and, above all, it brings with it a divine silence. For a few moments I cease to wish that I had wool in my ears—an indispensable precaution, by-the-by, for every candidate. There is a winnowing of the air, too, produced by the waving of ten thousand human hands, of a hundred thousand fingers and thumbs. True to my promise of impartiality, and, moreover, actuated by the knowledge, that if I let go of my gasman, I shall be instantly trampled upon, I do not hold up my own hand. But I examine the hands that *are* held up with all the interest of a Beamish. If I were that great chirognomist, I could doubtless tell by the “phalanges” of their thumbs whether the present company are Liberals or Conservatives ; but lacking his peculiar powers, and not having heard the name given forth from the hustings, I know not in whose interest is this display of digits. Neither does my gasman know, although he has one hand up, and greatly desires to hold up the other, and would (as he assures me,

to my great alarm), "if it wasn't for fallin' 'ed over tip atop of a gent like me." I give him the rest of my cherries, and adjure him to withstand all temptation of that nature ; then once more I gaze around.

Short hands, long hands, thin hands, strong hands, taper but tawny ones, hairy and brawny ones, most of them dirty ones, very few "shirty" ones, clothed in cotton or kid, or in thumb-stalls half hid, and a few even set off by jewel or ring—that grove of Palms was a most curious thing! It was an exercise, too, that pleased, for my neighbour was not the only one who added his mite to all the three great manual exhibitions ; and how the Returning Officer, with the best intentions in the world, could make allowance for the fact, that some held two hands up, and some only one, is between himself and his conscience. The show of hands is of little consequence *now*, but at no very distant day it may become very important, and foreshadow the result of all elections, since each of those hands will hold a vote. Then, indeed,

shall predictions be made by palmistry, and may Heaven avert all evil omens! It is something to say, however, that in all that stormy meeting no hand was clenched in anger, but all was good-humour from first to last: a very different scene from that when Castlereagh's candidate for Westminster stood on the same hustings, and was pelted with bricks and stones.

A goodly number of ladies smiled approval upon the scene from the neighbouring houses, and a bevy of three or four of them had the curious inscription of *Plump for Smith* stuck all round their window. They were plump undoubtedly; but the statement that they were all for Smith, struck this Home Correspondent as being (to say the least of it) invidious, and disappointing to the general public.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW I STOPPED THE BROWNES FROM ASKING
ME "TO COME IN THE EVENING."

READER, if thou art titled, wealthy, or agreeable beyond the common, thou hast never known, thou canst never know, the misery which forms the subject of this touching narrative. If thou hast a country-house with but so much as one spare room in it, or a villa residence by the sea, or a cottage ornée by the banks of Thames, so evil a thing can never happen to thee as to be asked "to come in the evening." No man—nay, not even woman, would dare to do it. Or, if thou art related to any peer, if even he be Irish, yea, if thou art but first-cousin to a baronet, so that thy host may say in well-selected pause at table,

“And how is Sir Charles when you last heard of him?” this humiliation can ne’er be thine. Or, if thou hast the gift for wit, and understandest how to “lift” the talk that hangs and flags sometimes even at a rich man’s board, thou art saved and spared.

Nevertheless, O favoured of fortune, it is for thee I write these words. List, list, O list to the complaint of one that is less happy in his social circumstances, who is poor, who is dull, whose name is Mr. Thomas Smith—uncompromising, pure and simple *Smith*, unredeemed either by *y* or *e*. If thou hast tears for a wrong that never can be thine, prepare to shed them now. It has doubtless often happened to thee that, after feasting at a friend’s, and filling thy sleek skin with pleasant viands and generous drinks, thou hast wondered, upon joining the ladies in the drawing-room, to see me sitting among them. Entering the apartment like a conquering Bacchus, with that careless freedom which can only result from having well dined, with thy lips yet parted with the smile

evoked by the last *mot* among thy male companions, thou hast, I say, often started upon beholding *me*. Thou hast said to thyself, "I have drunk much, but I have not drunk too much. There were but four of us men at table yonder, but lo, I behold a fifth! Steady, Brain, steady, and do not let us commit ourselves. It may be a phantasm born of that too delicious cucumber, or it may not. Let us see whether anybody speaks to it, for if not, I will sit down upon the very spot it seems to occupy, as recommended by Dr. Abernethy in his anecdotes of Indigestion."

Many and many a time have I watched these weird reflections pass athwart the countenance of a Dined man. I have seen the glass of astonishment—nay, sometimes double ones—raised to contemplate my mysterious form. By one fat, insolent man, I was once even snorted at. That son of Mammon—he was a banker fellow—made, I repeat, a nasal noise, exactly like that of a horse who first discovers an inferior fellow-creature in his pasture-ground. Few of these incomers get

over their surprise sufficiently to enter into conversation with the being that has thus excited it, and if they do so, they do not wish to cultivate his acquaintance. It is obvious that I am not an eligible individual. The host shakes hands with me (three fingers to my five), and asks in a low tone after my grandmother (who is not at all in society), and after that I drop hopelessly back again upon the governess. She is brought down from somewhere above stairs after dinner, and given over to me by the rest of the ladies, as by common consent, upon my joining the feminine circle. The pampered menial who opens the front door, and regards me scornfully as I strive to separate myself from my goloshes in the hall, announces me superciliously. The hostess remarks how kind it is of me to come, and I reply that it gives me the greatest conceivable pleasure to be able to do so. I then perceive that my arrival has interrupted some interesting female conversation, probably (since it is not resumed) of a scandalous nature; and the weather, for the

second time that evening, as regards the rest of the company, is brought forward in all its dreariness, and dilated upon with an affectation of interest, which in its hollowness is appalling. Presently appear the supercilious males. Society, to whom myself and my fellow-unfortunates are usually introduced about 9.30, has ordered its carriages at 10.15, so that we have just three-quarters of an hour to produce a favourable impression upon it.

Let us briefly recapitulate. In the first place, we have to remove the sense of wrongful intrusion, which our appearance cannot fail to have excited in every bosom. Secondly, we have to pass through that preliminary weather-stage which has been already accomplished by others, and to return to which induces loathing. And, thirdly, our name being Smith simple, our social position being (obviously) undesirable, and our intelligence below the average, we have to make our favourable impression. Mr. John Wilkes himself could never have accomplished this, whose boast was, "Ugly

though I be, I am only a quarter of an hour behind the handsomest man in England."

Why, then, I demand, in the name of our common humanity (which is the only thing that *is* common to the two parties), are we asked to "come in the evening," to meet people that have dined? Flushed, I do not say with Wine, but with the Victories of the Table, with *mots*, with anecdotes, with scandal, with agreeable banter, the original guests ride rough-shod over us interlopers, almost unconscious of our feeble resistance. Compared to us, they are as regular soldiery to a mere rabble armed with scythes. They have confidence in one another; they have been accustomed to act in concert; and they have watch-words and counter-signs of which we know nothing at all. The faintest hint, the most monosyllabic allusion, is the *open sesame* to peals of laughter among these persons, while we, who know nothing of what has foregone in another place—the dining-room—"stare with great eyes, and laugh with alien lips, and know not what is meant."

Do the host and hostess, who thus invite us to the fag-ends of their entertainments, believe that they are conferring a favour? If so, why do they not sometimes gratify my Lord Tom Noddy, Mr. Munny Bag, and that eminent satirist, Eppy Gram, Esq., in a similar manner. Is it possible that they persuade themselves that any one of us really have, or can have "pleasure in accepting their kind invitation for Tuesday evening?" If so, let them dismiss that notion from their minds at once as illusory in the very highest degree. We abominate the gilded insult. For my part, I would far rather receive the invitation-card of those less aristocratic circles which are said to have *Gin and Tripe* neatly engraved in the left-hand corner of it, instead of *Dancing*. Some elegances may of course be wanting in such a case, but at all events everybody *starts fair*. Nobody, I presume, is asked to come in the evening after *that* entertainment. Believe me, my fashionable friends, to array one's self in gorgeous apparel merely for three-quarters of an hour of your drawing-room

tittle-tattle, is, as the young lady of limited education observed with respect to learning the Alphabet, to go through a great deal for a very small result. O why, O why not ask us to dinner upon some "off-day" instead, and give us mutton-chops? These are only a shilling a pound, and we should be comparatively grateful; whereas, under the present circumstances, you are but sowing slights and reaping hatred. You may indeed carry this sort of thing a little too far, and in my case you have actually done it. This paper is nothing less than a public exposure of post-amphitryonism—the iniquitous system of compelling inoffensive persons to "come in the evening." You take advantage—look you, my cheaply hospitable friends—of your superior wealth or station to degrade us. We are the mere captives of your triumphs; the helots of your drawing-rooms; the "walking-gentlemen" of your after-dinner stage, who do not even get their shilling a night. On the contrary, it costs us two shillings and threepence apiece (for the cheaper ones split across the back), in those indis-

pensable decorations of the social sacrifice, our white kid gloves. Why do we come at all, then? do you ask. Nay, you know very well that we are under obligations to you, and, believe me, you have chosen for us a very sure, though, alas, not a speedy method of liquidating the same. Now, let me not be misunderstood. Evening-parties are very different affairs from those I speak of, and I believe are even liked by many persons. Those gatherings also which are called "receptions," that take place after some stupendous banquet, offer probably some peculiar advantages in the way of supper. Moreover, there are occasions when a really hospitable soul—a man who asks one to dinner—may give way, through mistaken benevolence, to the post-amphitryonic system, and yet not be absolutely criminal. But the wretches whom I now have in my mental eye are not to be excused on any of those grounds. They have two sets of acquaintances, one of which they ask to dinner, and one to "come in the evening." *I know it.*

The Brownes of Piccadilly, for instance, had me down in that second list for half-a-dozen seasons, and let this narration of how I at last got out of it be a warning to other Brownes. Browne senior lent me money once upon a time; or he became answerable for me when I was made Treasurer to the Society of Goldfinches; or he gave my second brother a presentation to Christ's Hospital; or he laid me under some similar obligation, of which we were both quite sensible. Each of us, I say, was well aware of our mutual relation, but Browne did not know after how many invitations to "come in the evening" an obligation begins to lie *upon the other side*. Browne never asked me to dinner—never, never, never! In the season, or out of the season, when salmon was dear, or when salmon was cheap, I never once sat at that man's board—for a tray with ices upon it is not a board at which one *can* sit down.

Browne's house in Piccadilly looks out upon the Green Park, and has a frontage of I don't know

how many feet. It does not run back, indeed, so far as my friend Browne (and especially Mrs. B.) would have it appear, but it is altogether a very fine mansion. The drawing-room (and no man knows it better than I) is gorgeously furnished in the style of Louis XIV. There are no less than three other apartments *en suite* with it, getting smaller and smaller, like a drawn-out telescope, until they end in what looks like a very handsome china closet. There is not an article of *vertu*, nor splendidly bound volume, nor statuette, nor ornament of any kind, in those four dazzling chambers that I have not stared at, sphinx-like, with a concentrated indifference, scores and scores of times. On one occasion only did I ever feel any glow of excitement there (for a sense of humiliation, unless you have the courage to resent it, is *not* excitement), when I had the misfortune to crack a Dresden china figure of about five feet high, which must have cost a mint of money. This was early in my acquaintance with the Brownes of Piccadilly, but, as I never confessed to having

committed the mischief, *that* could not have been the cause why they never asked me to dinner. How wretched that poor governess of theirs and I have been amid that splendid waste! How often have I heard vinous laughter upon the stately stair without, and seen that gilded door admit the arrogant Dined!

How long I should have gone on accepting Mr. and Mrs. Browne's obliging invitations, I cannot tell. Six years of more or less of them had already elapsed, and I obeyed them still, submissive and subordinate. Tompkins and Jones and I were a triumvirate who always met in that Piccadilly drawing-room, and our common wrongs had at length endeared us to each other. It was with genuine pleasure therefore (although I do not say without a pang of envy), that we heard that Tompkins's uncle had died at last, and left him his long-expected ten thousand pounds. This happened at the end of the Season; and at the beginning of the next, the hated three-cornered notes of evening welcome arrived as usual from

the Brownes of Piccadilly—arrived, that is, to Jones and me, but not to Tompkins. Tompkins's legacy had lifted him out of their No. 2 list, and placed him in No. 1. Tompkins was invited to *dinner*. Now this Jones and I felt to be quite intolerable. To have seen Tompkins come in at that gilded door with the self-satisfied and superior look which was only just endurable in strangers, would have been too much indeed. We didn't write back to express our sincere regrets that we were otherwise engaged—we were too indignant for that—but we both fully made up our minds that we would not be trampled under Tompkins's chariot-wheels. The Juggernaut of genuine fashion had indeed made a highway of our bodies for six years, but we were not yet a public tram-road for ordinary conveyances.

It is astonishing how free and happy we both felt after this valiant determination. Instead of that Friday evening casting before us a social gloom too oppressive to be called a shadow, we looked forward to it as to the declaration of our

independence—our 4th of July. We determined to dine together at the Club; to hold high festival in celebration of that first occasion on which the Brownes had asked us to “come in the evening,” and we didn’t mean to go. We dined at the very same hour at which Tompkins was to dine in Piccadilly, and we had six courses exclusive of the cheese. It was the commencement of an epoch, and we both agreed that expense should not be considered. After the Sauterne, and Sherry, and Champagne, the Claret tasted very refreshingly. We were in comfortable morning costume, with easy boots on, but it would now have been the hour, if we had not thrown off the yoke, when each must have given himself up to purgatorial pains—tight boots, tight cravats, tight gloves—and meekly gone in Hansoms to be offered up at Fashion’s shrine, opposite the Green Park. We pictured to ourselves the High-Priestess waiting for her victims, and drank the health of the female Browne, sardonically, in the second bottle. It was about this period that a slight disagreement

arose between Jones and myself upon the subject of the ceiling of the club dining-room; the one contending that it was honey-combed, and the other that it was tessellated, and neither feeling at all inclined to give up his opinion. We stared at it so long and fixedly that at last it actually appeared to both of us to be in motion, and this optical phenomenon prevented, of course, any satisfactory conclusion being arrived at. Jones, indeed, was for sending for the waiter to decide the question, but I declined to submit to any such authority. If Mr. Ruskin's opinion could be procured, said I, well and good; but otherwise, I would give in to nobody's; I had not come to that Club to be dictated to, for if such had been my object, I should have gone to the Brownes of Piccadilly. Jones replied, with pretended frankness, that he was the last man to wish to quarrel, although the ceiling was most certainly "desolated" (he had had, I am sorry to say, quite enough wine), and that we had better drop the subject, and go up to the smoking-room. As a further proof that my

companion was not in a fit state to give his opinion upon artistic subjects, I may mention that when the waiter came with the bill, he answered superciliously that he had "nothing for him," and added, that it was contrary to the regulations of the Club to give gratuities to any one, except at least (recollecting himself) *to members of the committee and the Honorary Sec.*

However, the fresh air of the smoking-room quite restored him, and we had an interesting, though rather desultory metaphysical discussion, which lasted through two cigars.

"By the by," observed Jones, *à propos de bottes*, "have you ever tasted *Knickerbocker*?"

"Knickerbocker," returned I; "why, that is boots and trousers; unless it is some Dutch liqueur, I cannot conceive the nature of it."

"Come along, then," exclaimed he with vivacity, and snatching up the nearest hat; "you have something to live for yet, my Smith, though you *have* lost the Brownes of Piccadilly. Let us go to the American Bar—not that to which Mr.

Edwin James has gone, but where there is every kind of Fancy Drink on draught—*Private Smiles* and *Silent Nods*, *Yankee Whispers*, *Ladies' Blushes!*"

"Sir," said I, not without some dignity, "I am a person of good morals; what is it you mean?"

"I mean *The Neverfailing Sodawater Cocktail*; 'Smashes' and 'Slings' of all kinds, and especially *Moral Suasion*."

"And what is that?" inquired I, for the name sounded respectable among so many hideous appellations—an oasis of good English in a desert of Slang.

"When the Maine Law fanatics carried that iniquitous Liquor measure," explained Jones, condescendingly, "they boasted that it had been accomplished by moral suasion. Whereupon, the other party, to restore the balance of power, invented an enchanting drink, and called it by that identical name, that *Moral Suasion* might be upon their side also. It is, therefore, well worthy of our attention, if only from its historical value. *Mint*

Julep, on the other hand, has almost a celestial birth. The divine Milton has even given us, in his *Comus*, the recipe for concocting that delicious compound, which it seems he preferred before all others, for 'first,' says he,

'Behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.'

"My dearest Jones," said I, "you are the Enchanter himself, and I fear I am not so virtuous as the Lady. Lead on, then, with all my heart, to the American Bar."

The Transatlantic gentleman who presided over this famous Institution was affable and attentive in the highest degree. We placed ourselves, at his own suggestion, entirely in his hands, and agreed to take whatever compound the nature of our condition (or complaint, as he humorously termed it) seemed to him to demand. He prepared a *Stone Fence* (price one shilling) in the first instance, but observing afterwards that we were "tighter than he had thought we were"—an

Americanism which I did not understand—he substituted for that a *Corpse Reviver*. As I watched the liquid fly from one crystal vessel to another in his nimble hands, I perceived that milk was an ingredient, and my heart sank within me. He promised, however, that a tumbler of this would make another man of each of us, and, in a certain limited sense, he was right. The immediate effect of the *Corpse Reviver* was to fill us with an extraordinary courage and determination. Our self-esteem rose fifty per cent., and with it our indignation at the conduct of the Brownes of Piccadilly.

“It would only serve them right,” observed Jones, defiantly, “since they have asked us so often ‘to come in the evening,’ when we had rather have stopped at home, if we were to pay them a visit for once when they didn’t want *us*. Suppose, now, we go to the Brownes to-night, after all. They said they were hoping to have the honour of our company; let them have it, then. What say you, my Smith?”

I applauded this heroic resolution, although not without some little misgiving. Our boots were already muddy, so that there was no use in taking a cab; and besides, we felt that motion and fresh air were absolutely essential to the favourable development of the effects of the Transatlantic elixir. It had not so much *revived* as *galvanised* us. If we once gave way to the "coma" which we felt impending, we had a presentiment that it would be all over with us. What we required was excitement; lights, music, jewels, fashionable conversation, and furniture of Louis Quatorze—the reception-room of the Brownes in Piccadilly was, in fact, the very place for us.

"We are not in evening-dress, my friend," observed Jones, stopping suddenly, and laying his hand affectionately upon a lamp-post.

I took no notice of this little mistake of identity, but replied from the other side of him, as though he had appealed to myself, as had been his intention.

"That is very true, my Jones, but what does it

matter? They ask for the pleasure of our company, not for that of our polished leather boots. Let us say that we knew what really hospitable people they were, and how glad they would be to see us drop in, in a family way. Browne will like that, I am sure."

The great house loomed rather awfully upon us as we approached its portals, and a little hesitation came over me, which caused me to ring the area-bell instead of that devoted to visitors. Jones, however, applied himself to the other with a compensatory vehemence, which brought the footman to the front-door upon the instant.

"Mrs. Browne at home?" inquired I, giving him my hat, but not making any effort to take off my great-coat, because I saw that Jones was failing in that endeavour signally.

"There is a party to-night, gentlemen," observed the footman, regarding our personal appearance with some misgiving.

"Yes," said I, "a dinner-party and an evening-party; we belong to the evening-party, we do; ha! ha!"

It was a curious and striking illustration of the proverbial insolence of the pampered menials of Fashion that this footman, assisted by other retainers, did absolutely and by force prevent my Jones from going upstairs. They said that it was impossible that he could do such a thing with his great-coat on, nor would they permit him to prove that the thing was really practicable by doing it. I sat on one of the hall chairs, and watched the fracas without much interest; lack of interest in all sublunary (or indeed in any) matters, being, as I found, the chief feature of the *Corpse Reviver* after the first twenty minutes. I only drummed with my heels upon the hall floor (which, being of polished oak, was fortunately reverberatory), and shouted at the top of my voice for Tompkins. My conciliatory and peaceful conduct shone out, I flatter myself, by contrast with that of my companion. If Tompkins would come, said I, all would be forgotten and forgiven, but otherwise they must take the consequences. The commotion connected with Jones

at last communicated itself throughout the palatial residence ; the cry for Tompkins penetrated into the four reception-rooms. Old Browne himself came down in an awful state of excitement, but I did not pay the slightest attention to him. I wanted my Tompkins, and at last my Tompkins came. Then I reproached him with his conduct in coming to dinner that day, and leaving his old friends to "come in the evening," till I think he looked rather ashamed of himself.

As for Browne of Piccadilly, my last memorable words to him were these : "Now, don't you go asking my friend Jones again, nor me, to come to any of these after dinner-parties of yours, for we don't like 'em ; so, let this be a warning to you."

And I suppose that it *was* a warning to him, for the Brownes of Piccadilly have never asked either of us "to come in the evening" from that day to this. *Verbum sap.*

CHAPTER IX.

LAST HOMES OF THE LONDONERS.

THIRTY years ago, the last home of even a wealthy Londoner was a crowded vault beneath some church hemmed in by houses; while that of the poorer sort could hardly be called a resting-place, since, sooner or later, their bones had to make way for the more recently deceased, and were thrown to left and right by the grave-digger. Higher and higher grew the half-human church-yard, shutting out window after window of the many peopled houses round from outlook and air, and substituting for the one a wall of rank rich grass, whose greenness speaks not of life and spring-time, but of death and corruption, and for the other, the pestilence that walketh in the noonday and the

night alike. Even in the vaults of so-called fashionable churches, not only were no pains taken to render death less abhorrent, but it was positively made more hideous by circumstance. The tawdry pomp of crape and baton, of pawing horses and nodding plumes, and all the hired panoply of sorrow, went no further than the grave's mouth.

I remember being present at a certain funeral in those days—a "first class interment," it was called, in the jargon of the undertaker—where all the outward respect that could be provided for the sad occasion had been purchased without regard to expense. Gentlemen in dusky pairs, and overcome with costly emotion, preceded the long procession, each furnished with what looked like a folded telescope, as though they would have followed with their bodily eyes the supposed direction of the late flight of the fashionable spirit. Then a dusky gentleman alone, bearing a board upon his head with ostrich feathers on it, exactly as the Italian image-boys carry their frail wares. Then another group of telescope-bearers. Then a sort of (muffled)

drum-major in the deepest mourning and despondency. After him the hearse itself, with a gentleman more than dusky—for he was a genuine black man—sitting beside the driver. The appearance of this person was calculated to excite sympathy even from the most callous spectator. He was bowed no less with years than with grief, and his short hair—which still retained the curl peculiar to his race—was as white as wool.

I inquired of a relative of the deceased person who this individual was, for I did not remember ever to have seen him in that gentleman's household.

“I dare say not,” returned he; “for the fact is, I never set eyes on him myself before to-day. Mr. Mole, however, assured us that it would be the correct thing to engage him. ‘An ancient and valued retainer of the family,’ said he, ‘is indispensable on such occasions as these, and a black man for this purpose is invaluable.’ He is set down in the estimate at £3 16s., exclusive of the cambric handkerchief—which, to do him justice,

he applies to his eyes as continuously as is consistent with exhibiting his complexion to the general public."

After the hearse came, of course, the mourning coaches, and a long train of private carriages, full, perhaps, of unmitigated grief—for there was nothing else in them. At the mouth of the dismal-looking vault we were all arranged in a certain order, while Mr. Mole distributed among us little packets of lavender-coloured paper, which I took at first to contain sugar-plums, but which in reality held gravel, refined to the delicate consistency of cayenne-pepper. "At the words 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust,'" whispered he to each of us with a solemn smirk, "you will be so kind as to sprinkle the contents upon the coffin."

And yet, I remember, when the grim pantomime was over, and the plumes were packed away, and the hired mourners (including the ancient retainer) consoling themselves for their bereavement in the neighbouring public-house, the coffin of the deceased person's late wife, who had been buried but

a few years back with the like magnificence, and next to which he had wished his own to be laid, could nowhere be found. The relative before alluded to, and myself, had remained behind to see that this request was carried out, and but for us it would certainly have been disregarded. We descended into the vault, and only after several hours discovered what we sought. All the coffins, without the least regard to the relationship of their inmates, were bound up in bundles of half-a-dozen each, and fastened together by means of huge black chains. How wretched was such a resting-place, contrasted with a grave that "takes the sunshine and the rains," such as the very humblest can command in a village churchyard!

It is true that there are some few quiet and suitable spots for sepulture even in London—some very "snug lying" beneath the shade of deep-hidden city churches, and in cloisters, rarely or never trodden by the foot of a chance passenger. In the precincts of the Charter House, and about Westminster Abbey, there are several such places sunk

in shadow and silence, to which neither the noise nor the beams of highest noon can penetrate. In an inner court of the latter locality, I came but lately upon a half-obliterated memorial-stone, which cannot surely have met many eyes. The tablet states of the deceased that "through the spotted vaile of the small-pox he presented an unspotted soul to his Maker."

In some old London churchyards, too, there are cypresses, and some, such as that in Camden Town, wherein Charles Dibdin, the song-writer, is buried, are even planted with flowers.

As a general rule, however, the Last Homes of Londoners of all ranks have been, until lately, a disgrace to our civilisation, and calculated in sensitive minds to add another terror to death. All this is now happily changed. It is almost impossible to take a long walk in any direction out of London without coming upon one or other of its beautiful cemeteries. These vary in size from about fifty to ten acres, but are all laid out in a similar manner. Each is divided into two unequal

parts, the smaller section being unconsecrated, and devoted to the reception of those not buried according to the rites of the Established Church. Such a distinction in such a place, seems pitiable enough ; but it is dependent upon the nature of the funeral service only, and is not affected by the form of creed held by the deceased persons in life. In one of the cemeteries, there is a family vault whereupon is inscribed the important fact, that one part of it is consecrated, and the other not ; but the flowers seem to grow equally well on both sides.

Flowers and shrubs are to be found in more or less profusion in all cemeteries, but few trees, since the gradual extension of their roots destroys the graves, and rain-droppings from their branches damage the head-stones. In all, too, there is one broad walk or carriage-drive, by the side of which are the most striking monuments, and in some, it is said, that ground cannot be purchased in that particular situation unless it is guaranteed that not less than two hundred pounds will be expended in

decoration. There are many monuments that have cost five times this sum, and which are certainly very imposing, but the effect, so far as pathos is concerned, is generally in inverse ratio to the money expended. Enormous blocks of granite or marble, with life-size figures of Faith, for instance, upon them, do not present that idea of tender sorrow, which a few sea-shells—his playthings during life, perhaps—scattered over a child's grave, convey. In cemeteries in poor neighbourhoods, these shells, and plaster-of-Paris Infant Samuels, form the most common decorations.

What has been observed concerning the relative size of monument is equally true of length of epitaph. These are almost always affecting in proportion to their brevity, and this is especially true in the case of little children, where many words must needs be out of place. The surname of these little lost ones is sometimes not even mentioned. "Walter" is inserted on one headstone, accompanied only by the date; on another, "My

Poor Child;" and on another a most touching (although slightly misquoted) text, "It is well with the child. It is well." [2 Kings, iv. 26.]

Very many foreigners find their last homes in London cemeteries, far away from the places where their fathers lie within the shadow of the Swiss mountains, or by the rapid Rhone, or beneath the Italian skies, or under the palm-trees of the still more distant East. "Wola Twoja," "Chinniah," and "Mahalath," although they have no other epitaph, yet surely speak not without pathetic eloquence. Most of these alien graves exhibit peculiar signs of care, as though their occupants, though dead, were not friendless, but the *immortelles* which generally hang about them are not adapted for this damp climate, and when once soaked with rain, resemble wreaths of rusty iron. There is no reference to their own land, or repining at the fate which cast their lot in life so far from home; but there is one unhappy Frenchman in Kensal Green, upon whose tomb his surviving friends and compatriots, I suppose, have inscribed

this libel against our Metropolitan climate. "Suf-focated in a London fog !" Humour and tenderness are twin sisters, and it is impossible, even while walking amid these groves of death, to refrain from an occasional smile at what we read. Most of the epitaphs are texts, and a few are quotations from well-known religious poems,* but the majority are either amateur compositions by surviving friends, or stock verses furnished by the stone-cutter. Conceive the compliment to the religious feelings of the departed, as well as to the skill of his medical attendants, conveyed in the following distich :

" Pain was my portion ;
Physic was my food ;
Groans were my devotion ;
Drugs did me no good."

This is plain speaking ; but the interpretation of the following lines, in Kensal Green, is hidden from the present writer altogether :

* Gray's *Elegy* is laid under contribution for this purpose—as far as my observation has gone—in *one single instance only*.

“ Grandchild of Rowland’s apostolic man,
Seraphic messenger of God in Wales,
And she in youth her Christian course began,
Till death endured—— Now it well avails.”

The fulsome adulation of many of these compositions is very sad, and would be extravagant even if angels, and not men, were the subjects of eulogy. The well-known child’s question, “ But where are all the naughty people buried, papa ? ” cannot but recur to us as we read them ; and when I came, the other day, in a certain place, upon a Captain Somebody, “ Unattached,” I protest it was quite refreshing, since everyone else but he, it seemed, had left a host of inconsolable friends.

One or two of the original inscriptions are, on the other hand, at least applicable to the circumstances of the deceased person. In the unconsecrated portion of one cemetery may be read the following lines, an example considerably above the average of its class :

“ Full many a flower that blossomed in his path
He stooped to gather, and the fruit he plucked,
That hung from many a tempting bough, all but

The Rose of Sharon and the Tree of Life.
This flung its fragrance to the gale, and spread
Its blushing beauties. That its healing leaves
And fruit immortal. All in vain
He neither tasted nor admired, and found
All that he chose and trusted fair, but false ;
The flowers no sooner gathered, than they faded ;
The fruits enchanting, dust and bitterness ;
And all the world a wilderness of care.
Wearied, dispirited, and near the close
Of an eventful course, he sought the plant
That long his heedless haste o'erlooked, and proved
Its sovereign virtues, underneath its shade,
Outstretched, drew from his wounded feet the thorns,
Shed the last tear, breathed the last sigh, and here
This loved one rests in more than trembling hope."

Of quotations of any length, perhaps the most appropriate is that which follows, copied from a tombstone in the consecrated part of the same cemetery, and inscribed, as will be seen, to the memory of one who perished young :

" 'Tis ever thus, 'tis ever thus with all that's best below—
The dearest, noblest, loveliest, are always first to go.
The bird that sings the sweetest, the pine that crowns the
rock,
The glory of the garden, the flower of the flock.
'Tis ever thus, 'tis ever thus with creatures heavenly fair ;

Too finely framed to bide the storms more earthly creatures bear,
A little while they dwell with us, blest ministers of love
Then spread the wings we had not seen,
And seek their home above."

The most favourite sepulchral style among the aristocracy appears to be the "Egyptian," and vast piles of Aberdeen granite are often erected after that pattern, with weird, and, to say truth, very pagan-looking figures guarding what appears to be the portal. The sphynx herself, however, would be puzzled to indicate whereabouts the entrance really is. Sometimes a mighty slab has to be removed in front of the seeming gate, and sometimes the back of the gigantic mass, being assailed by levers, revolves slowly upon a central pivot, and gives admission to the ancestral tomb. In deference to this singular taste, I suppose, there is erected in the Highgate Cemetery a circular catacomb of this fashion, embracing a considerable space, from the centre of which—and unapproachable except by a ladder—there springs an enormous yew. The effect is sombre and stately,

but evokes not the slightest throb of human sympathy. Those mighty, nameless doors, surmounted with coronets and coats of arms, are powerless to move the heart, in comparison with a grass-green grave set round with violets and primroses. It would, however, be a deception to let it be supposed that in all cases where flowers or fresh grass are found growing about a tomb, surviving friends must needs have set them there, for a certain annual stipend to the Burial Company will insure the payment of these pious rites at their due season.

The emblematical statuary is generally of a very stereotyped character, nor do the middle classes therein exhibit themselves one whit less artificial than their betters. Veiled women weeping over tea-urns—who might be ladies suffering from sea-sickness for all that the artist indicates to the contrary; tea-urns covered decently with a stone mantle; tea-urns in all their native deformity; broken lilies, broken columns, broken rosebuds; weeping willows, and especially *frosted*

weeping willows, without the least reference to the season in which the deceased person may have perished; doves bearing between their beaks huge open volumes, with texts inscribed upon their marble leaves—all these are to be found in myriads in all the cemeteries, and so alike to one another, that each class might have been turned out by the same machine. There are not a few monuments, however, whose effect is really good, and many less ambitious ones which are exquisitely beautiful and touching.

Among the former, the tombs of deceased hippodrome proprietors are very remarkable. That of the late Mr. Cooke, at Kensal Green, is surmounted by a well-executed horse; and opposite to this, singularly enough, is the sumptuous mausoleum of Mr. Ducrow, of Astley's. A tomb, also ornamented by a horse, forms a striking feature in Highgate Cemetery. It is apparently dedicated to some lady famous for her equestrian skill, since the epitaph commences—

“She's gone, whose nerve could curb the swiftest steed.”

At Highgate, too, there is a massive memorial to Mr. Wombwell, "menagerist," in the form of a magnificent lion. A more gigantic animal of the same species adorns the monument to Jackson, the famous fencing-master and prize-fighter, in the West London Cemetery, whose epitaph is also singularly good. An architect, interred in the last-named spot, lies, appropriately enough, beneath a huge block of rough granite; and on the tomb of a French engraver, in the same place, his last and unfinished work is preserved in glass, and skilfully set into the headstone. Medallions taken from the life are not uncommon upon the graves of wealthy persons; and in Kensal Green there is a most exquisite chalk-drawing of a little child, taken a few hours after death, and inserted with frame and glass within the stone.

Of all the Last Homes of the Londoners, Kensal Green is perhaps the most interesting, although by no means so favoured in position as some others. It is the oldest and the most extensive, and therefore the most repaying to the curiosity-hunter in

its collection of Celebrities of all kinds. Within its fifty-three acres lie Lord and Leveller, Priest and Actor, Poet and Clown. His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex and half the late British peerage rest within a few yards of Feargus O'Connor. Thomas Barnes, the editor of the *Times*, sleeps his last sleep by "Barnard Gregory, the Satirist." Sydney Smith is on the same level with Richard Flexmore. Charles Kemble shares the same stage with Madame Vestris. Close to the beautiful monument of Thomas Hood stands the tomb of John Murray, for Death will make even author and publisher lie together in peace. Nay, the very doctors—so impatient of innovation—whose skill has been useless to avert Death's dart from themselves, here lie undisturbed and quiet in the same plot of earth with St. John Long, the "counter irritation" practitioner, and James Morison, the Hygeist.

CHAPTER X.

AGAINST AGRICULTURISTS IN OMNIBUSES.

WHEN the Rev. Sydney Smith was asked by some foolish lady in want of "something to say," Why the posts had been narrowed which led into the Green Park, he is said to have replied, "Madam, you have no idea what fat people *used* to get into that park."

Now, could not this narrowing process be applied to the doors of omnibuses, so that persons above a certain bulk should be excluded therefrom? I am not a captious person, easily aggrieved; I would allow very considerable latitude as well as gravity; but I do think that there should be a limit. Say, eighteen or nineteen stone. Beyond this weight fellow-passengers become encroaching and unbear-

able. They surge over their neighbours; they even overlap their *vis-à-vis*; they possess all the disadvantages of crinoline, with the addition that the crinoline is solid. It is true that this only happens once a year, during the December cattle-show, when all the great country-folk come up to town—for London does not grow its own people of this preposterous size—but why should it happen at all? Why should not the ordinary omnibus licences be suspended for that week, and arrangements made to meet the tremendous emergency? Let the number of Insides be limited to six instead of twelve, and the Outsides be similarly abated; and let every agriculturist be charged double the usual fare. It is idle to state that such arrangements would have the effect of causing these enormous personages to walk. At the worst, it can only cause them to wish to do so. They *must* ride. Nor can it with any reason be urged that such increase of the tariff will drive them into cabs. It is quite an exceptional case where two of them can be compressed into even a four-

wheel cab. As for the Hansoms, a single specimen—if such an adjective can be applied to gentlemen of such proportions—not only fills a Hansom, but overflows it, and especially bulges out at the doors, which have in all cases to be thrown back. To restore the equilibrium, the driver has to lie along the top of his vehicle.

The condition of even the best cab-horses, I am assured, is sensibly affected by the Agricultural Week ; and they contract a habit of looking back at a hirer (in order to calculate the probable amount of his weight), which they do not lose until the occasion has long passed by, which has thus aroused their apprehensions. The unfortunate animals cannot, of course, be made to understand the temporary nature of this infliction ; they imagine that their tyrant, Man, has suddenly trebled himself, and that burdens will for the future be laid on them heavier than they can bear.

They cannot read the announcements, in appropriately tremendous type, which garnish every wall, stating that the invasion is For One Week

Only. They know not that all the festive preparations for receiving "the young man from the country," and his male relatives at the Music Halls, the Cyder Cellars, the Pavilions, the Alhambras, and the Casinos are confined, most fortunately, to half-a-dozen nights. Something, then, ought to be done, if only on the score of humanity towards the brute creation. But, I submit, that there are reasons for action of a far more lofty and important nature, insomuch as they affect ourselves.

Let it be distinctly understood, however, that we of the city are actuated by no unfriendly feelings towards our magnificent visitors. Our big brother is always welcome, except in an omnibus. We gladly acknowledge his hospitality, his good-nature, and his many other becoming virtues. We know that he would not grow himself so uncommonly fine if he could help it. There may be other theories upon this subject, but it is my own opinion that he catches it from the beasts; that having the physical increase of his own cattle for ever on his mind, and contemplating their gradual

expansion, his own proportions become amplified from day to day, until, so far as size is concerned, he is as ripe for public exhibition as themselves. Husband and wife are said to grow alike through constant association, and something of this kind seems to occur in the case of the farmer and his live stock. There is also a very philosophical view of volition, taken by some physiologists, which would appear to point to the same result; but in a paper addressed to my bucolic brethren, any reference to such far-fetched theories would be out of place, for they are sensible people. Mr. Ruskin asserts that properly to paint a tree, it is necessary that the painter should so deeply sympathise with his subject as in some sort himself to become a tree; and thus it is with the breeding of fat cattle: to produce a winner, you must qualify for the prize yourself.

It may be a fanciful notion, but as I walked in that vast hall of Islington, the other day, with an eye to men as well as muttons, I imagined I could distinguish the gentlemen who gave themselves

up to Southdowns, from those who exclusively devoted themselves to oxen. The one class was Ovine—wooden, woolly, stolid, and yet apprehensive of some wrong being done upon them, such as the being violently punched in the small of their backs; the other was Bovine—patient, comfortable, “lapped in dreamy ease,” and chewing the cud of contemplation with their eyes half-closed. There was one quadruped of the latter kind, with a bucketful of turnips before him, lying down and eating—after the fine old Roman fashion, but who outdid the luxury of the ancients by being, in addition, fast asleep. Immediately in front of him stood his owner, or breeder, or foster-father, equally large, equally sleek, and equally oblivious to the affairs of this attenuating world. He had some sort of cake—perhaps oilcake—in his nerveless hand; an irregular motion of the jaws proclaimed that there was more cake there; the palate was being gratified, while the intellect roamed at will over the land of dreams, or “winged the lucent hyaline of the empyrean.” If I ever saw perfect

enjoyment *reflected*—it shone in each of those not inexpressive countenances. *Fed on food seasoned with Thorley's Condiment*, was inscribed upon a placard midway between the man and the ox. I know not to which that statement applied, but I repeated to myself the medical dictum, "Avoid sauces," with a convulsive shudder. My mind wandered for a little to the doctrine of metempsychosis, but presently settled itself to the ridiculous consideration of whether, in the event of the Royal Agricultural Society making me a present of that ox, I should accept it, fettered with the condition of personally driving it home? Could I do it, or could I not do it? A friend of mine had bought a Shetland pony at the Battersea Cattle-show; after he had paid for it, the salesman coolly informed him that he must catch it himself out of the drove. The majority of purchasers would have shrunk from completing the transaction, but my friend was muscular, and of a determined mind. He strode in among the Lilliputian throng, and after two or three hours of distracting

pursuit, he secured his shaggy steed, and carried it out *under his arm* like a toy-horse. The jeering crowd advised him to enter the little animal for the Derby, but he had gone through too much already to be moved by mere satire ; and having once got his property off the premises, he suffered it to find its legs, and clutching a handful of its tossing mane, led it home as though it were a dog.

But what an easy task was the foregoing compared with the difficulties that would occur in the suppositious case of this ox being presented to myself ! How, in the first place, should I ever persuade him to rise ? No weapon that I possessed could inform him of my wishes in that respect ; the blade of my little penknife would lose itself in fat without ever reaching a sentient locality ; the ferrule of my umbrella would never penetrate his skin ; as for my scarf-pin, I might just as well have stuck it in its ordinary pincushion. If even I got him up, and out of the hall, what hideous obstacles would intervene between us and Bayswater ! How the populace would enjoy the

spectacle of a prize-ox being persuaded by a gentleman of fashion to accompany him to his suburban home! How they would relish a drover with an eyeglass! What a crowded thoroughfare would the New Road become under such circumstances! Suppose the stupendous animal should break through into the Underground Railway! Suppose a dog should attack him, and hang on to his nose, what should I do then? What pitiful sounds would he utter under such a misfortune as that! Or suppose he caught sight of a market-cart filled with mangel-wurzel going to Covent Garden, and persisted in taking *that* direction! Or suppose he waddled off into a rather narrow street which tapered at the extremity, and blocked it completely up, without being able to turn round, what a situation would that be for his proprietor! Or suppose he expired suddenly in Oxford and Cambridge Terrace, might I sell him as he lay, by the pound, to unfashionable Paddington butchers, or would he be considered to revert to the Royal Agricultural Society, because I had

not fulfilled their conditions by getting him quite home ?

These inquiries respecting the removal of the wonderful Ox were mere suppositions (although, of course, he *was* got home by somebody, and I should dearly like to know how) ; but as respected his ally and sympathiser, the Man, they were terribly real. How was *he* to be got home ? I have fixed upon him merely as a type of the bucolic class (albeit he was what the printers call "leaded," in larger print than the rest of them), and I demand the same question respecting them, which brings me back to the omnibus subject with which I started—How are they to be got home ? To suggest pedestrianism is merely to be insulting, since that is the very exercise which would tend to diminish their noble characteristics. Four-wheeled cabs for two are expensive, as are Hansoms for one. It is obvious that they must make use of Omnibuses, which, indeed, would appear to be the proper vehicles for persons of their (first-rate) condition. As a Sociable, which holds four,

is to ordinary individuals, so is our omnibus to our agricultural friends—but what if you attempt to make that omnibus hold *twelve*! To the agriculturists themselves, this little matters, for when six or eight are in it, even the cad is obliged to proclaim that he is, “Full Inside.” He may inveigle would-be passengers as far as the step, but he knows they will never cross the threshold. They perceive the state of the case at once, and promptly descend, to seek some rival vehicle patronised by the aborigines only. Nothing happens in this case worse than the inconvenience of delay.

But supposing that persons of moderate size are already *in* the omnibus, the entrance of these gigantic folk becomes serious indeed. The original inhabitants must make up their minds at once either to endure all things or to flee; for after more than one of them has entered in, escape is impossible—you cannot *get by*—you are enclosed in a living tomb, which is also locomotive. General observations, however, fail to convey the terrors of this awful position. Let me narrate an experi-

ence, which occurred to my own half-sister, Miss Bridget Lamb, of Baker Street, on Wednesday, December 10, 1862, as related by her own lips. I will myself guarantee the truthfulness of her narration, for I know her well to be as incapable of falsehood as of invention. She is a person of the strictest principles, and has no imagination whatever.

“I arrived at London Bridge from Greenwich at about 4.30 on Wednesday afternoon. As I had no luggage, and there was still some daylight, I thought I would save a cab-fare by taking an omnibus. By help of a policeman, I escaped out of the clutches of seven cads (all of whom assured me they were going in my direction), and got into a Paddington *Royal Oak*, which I knew must pass the end of Baker Street. It was better, at all events, than trusting myself to an *Elephant and Castle*, though it solemnly averred that it would drop me at my door. Still, I did not like to hear the conductor observe to the driver, across the roof of the vehicle, that ‘the Old Gal would have a

good round of it.' I could not help thinking—for I knew that the insolence of this class of person is unbounded—that the remark might have some distant reference to myself. However, there was one passenger beside me, who informed me that he was 'going all the way to the Oak,' and this convinced me that I could not at least be in the wrong 'bus; he was an inoffensive, pleasant little man, and by the long white roll of paper which he carried in his hand, as well as by his affable manners, I concluded him to be a civil engineer. I was quite pleased to have the companionship of so respectable a person, and that I should save eighteenpence at least, without suffering any of those inconveniences which my half-brother is always prophesying for ladies who ride in omnibuses. There was a stoppage in King William Street, to be sure, for about three-quarters of an hour, but we had a fine view of the Monument all the time. Just before we got to the Bank, the omnibus stopped for longer than the usual time—which, I think, is half a second—allowed for the

admittance of a passenger ; a very stout gentleman placed his foot upon the step, and as he did so, I felt the whole omnibus 'tit up,' so that I thought the horses must be off their legs. 'Woa, woa, my lud,' said he to the grinning conductor ; 'there's another little one a-coming.' And sure enough, another very stout gentleman, and the counterpart of the first one, followed him in. It was quite dreadful to see how light they made of their own condition. 'Licensed to carry twelve on us, eh !' said one, referring to some legal notice stuck up in the vehicle ; 'well, I shouldn't like to be the eleventh, nor yet the ninth, for the matter of that.'

"The little engineer was much depressed by the incursion of these formidable persons, and he whispered across to me that he did not understand it, but that he did not seem to be going to the Poultry at all.

"'Poultry ! Why, no, sir, there's nothing but beastesses and such-like, as *we're* going to see," observed No. 1 stout gentleman.

“‘Beastesses and peags,’ remarked No. 2, with gravity, as though making an important correction.

“‘But I don’t want to go to the cattle-show,’ exclaimed my *vis-à-vis* impatiently. ‘Hi, conductor, hi; I want to go to the Royal Oak.’

“‘All right, sir, and so yer shall; only we goes to the Hangel *first*, for the convenience of these here gentlemen. It won’t make scarcely any difference in point o’ time. Cattle-*show*! cattle-*show*!! Whose for Islington and the fat-cattle-*show*!!!’

“The little engineer would have got out then and there, only No. 1 and No. 2 stout gentlemen were sitting exactly opposite one another, so that their respective waistcoats touched. Egress was thus rendered impossible, unless one of them could be induced to move, which was a circumstance that did not seem probable. Then we plunged through the gathering gloom into Finsbury, past the Artillery Ground (as the conductor informed one of the two strangers), a place I never thought

to have beheld in my mortal life, and so along a dreadfully unfinished thoroughfare, called the City Road, to the Angel. Here, thought the little engineer and I, we shall at least be free; but although the two got out, no less than six twin brothers of theirs squeezed themselves in, in their place; the windows were thus entirely obscured; a seventh giant, who was permitted to stand on the step until somebody should get out, filled up the doorway, so that we were in almost total darkness.

“My original companion, in whom I had begun to feel much interest, engendered by our common misfortune, would not, however, have been visible, even had there been light. His white roll of paper seemed to gleam forth from the pocket of the monster who had absorbed him. As for myself, I could breathe (with difficulty), and that was all. My steel crinoline became first spherical, and then of a diamond shape, having “given” in four places. It was shocking to imagine what an appearance I should present when I got out,

but still more shocking to consider that there was no probability of my getting out at all. It was already past our usual dinner-hour in Baker Street, and my brother was the fussiest person for punctuality, as well as the most despondent in his views respecting what has made anybody late. He would be almost sure to conclude that I had been garrotted; certainly he would never imagine that I was in the far end of an Islington omnibus, with half-a-dozen mountains of men between myself and liberty.

“When we arrived at the top of Baker Street, I felt it was useless to stop the vehicle. I could not ask six gentlemen to get out in the mud, in order to permit of my exit. I was carried on with them to Paddington station, to which, as I was well aware, they were all bound. I got out there—leaving the little civil engineer like a thread-paper in collapse, but retaining his precious roll intact—and took a cab to Baker Street. Thus, beside the injuries to a certain article of apparel, to which I have already alluded, my journey home was not a

cheap one after all. My half-brother, too, had already incurred considerable expenses in advertising me in the evening papers, and in driving about to the various police-offices. The dinner, too, having been much spoiled, his temper had suffered proportionately; his language was such as it is impossible for me to repeat; and so far from sympathising with my misfortunes, he observed, with brutal vulgarity, that 'it served me precious right for taking a 'bus.'"

The above is the sad story of my sister Bridget. It is all true, with the exception of the last few statements. My temper was quite unruffled, and my language temperate in the extreme. I did say, however, that for a person like herself, who had actually lived in Baker Street, where the cattle-show used to be held until now, and who must, therefore, be well acquainted with the *contour* of our bucolic visitors—for *her*, I said, to get into an omnibus during the Agricultural Week, for the sake of saving eighteen-pence, was the act of an economical monomaniac—of a female Elwes.

Still, are these vehicles never to be placed under restrictions that may meet the periodical emergency? Can nothing be done?

CHAPTER XI.

BOXING-NIGHT.

THERE is a day in December upon which, although it takes place during Christmas-time, class is set against class more than on any other day in the year. The poor rejoice in it, but the rich grumble exceedingly; the kitchen is uproarious with merriment, but the drawing-room floor, and especially "the study," where Paterfamilias sits, are shrouded in gloom.

"Please, sir, the postman," exclaims our parlour-maid, in cherry-coloured ribbons, and with cherry cheeks, for the postman has probably kissed her; "and please, sir, the dustman" (who, let us hope, has not ventured upon such a liberty); "and please, sir, the grocer's young man has called for himself and his pardner."

"Then I am not his pardoner," returns Paterfamilias, stung into repartee.—"And where is the money to come from, my dear,* I should like to know, for all these Christmas boxes? I wish there was no such thing as Boxing-day in the calendar."

He might just as well wish that there was no such periodical as Lady-day. It is the great red-letter day of the year to all the lower classes of London, from linen-drapers' assistants down to costermongers, and is becoming, so to speak, *redder* annually. It is made more of a festival, "allowed" by the great employers of London labour more and more, and may fairly be considered the great metropolitan holiday. Christmas-day, which would otherwise enjoy that pre-eminence, has a smack of Sunday about it; and the Derby-day is only a holiday under the rose. Under these circumstances, it has become absolutely necessary that Boxing-

* The expression "My dear" is, of course, addressed not to the parlour-maid, but to Materfamilias, who has looked in to see how "papa" takes it.

day should be fitly chronicled; and when we say "fitly," it will be understood that we mean chronicled by our Home Correspondent. The only obstacle to this arrangement was, that since the feast in question is chiefly remarkable for its evening amusements, our H. C. had to break through his well-known domestic habits, and go out at night. However, the nature of the enterprise being explained to him, he undertook it at once, and cheerfully; and, indeed, it is our opinion, that his noble nature is so constituted that he would tread the Path of Duty, even though it led through a Garrotte-walk. Here follows the result of his experience:

If you would see Boxing-night in its true colours—which are bright even to gaudiness—you must patronise a transpontine pantomime, and not the Halls of Dazzling Delight at "the Lane" or "the Garden." "The gallery" at the two great national theatres is composed of materials too aristocratic for our purpose; the tariff of admission thereto being prohibitive even to exclusion. Such persons

would occupy the stalls in the places of amusement of "the people," and in full evening costume ; or, in other words, they would keep their coats on. As soon, therefore, as the H. C. had received his instructions, he took a Hansom from his Belgravian residence to the Theatre-royal, Putt Street, and bespoke the stage-box for the 26th of December. Not, be it understood, from any feeling of pride ; but firstly, because he suspected (very justly, as it turned out) that he would be a little too crowded elsewhere to make his philosophic observations ; and secondly, because his expenses are defrayed by his proprietors. The price of the privilege thus demanded was 10s. 6d. ; and the H. C. tendered a five-pound note in payment thereof. Now, the man inside the little light-house with the pigeon-hole (through which to receive the prices of admission), had been a good deal staggered by my wanting the stage-box at all ; and when he beheld the note, I saw the idea strike him like lightning, that the whole proceeding was an ingenious swindle, and an attempt to pass "flash" paper.

"It won't do, my friend," said he, with a grim smile; and then, perceiving my look of virtuous indignation, he added dryly: "We haven't got so much money in the treasury."

"Here is five shillings," observed I, calmly, "which you may retain by way of deposit; only be sure that the box is kept for me."

At the word "deposit," the man's countenance changed from suspicion to benignity. He explained, with great civility, that he was not himself empowered to receive so vast a sum, but that there was an individual within who would take it upon his own responsibility, and give me a written acknowledgement. This document, which cost me a shilling to the man who wrote it, cost me another to the cabman, on account of the period consumed in its due and proper execution; and my belief is, that the person of responsibility could not write his name, and that the manager had to be sent for from some suburban residence for that purpose. The pantomime in Putt Street, instead of being the last piece to be represented, as is usual, pre-

ceded the rest of the performances ; for a Boxing-night audience in that locality is not remarkable for patience, but must behold their favourite spectacle at once. The hour of commencement being seven, this Home Correspondent (whose sense of duty is equal to that of the conscientious actor who, in order to perform Othello, blacked himself all over) arrived in the neighbourhood a little after six ; and I write “in the neighbourhood” by design, since Putt Street was by that time quite blocked up by a fanatical public, who had been already assured three times that the Theatre-Royal was full to suffocation. To a person of my delicate frame and spiritual organisation, any attempt to force a passage would have been futile ; nor is it probable that my powers of persuasion, however fascinating, would have induced the multitude to make way for me ; I might just as well have expected them to recognise my genius by strewing chaplets of roses ; but I had taken the precaution to bring a friend with me broad in the shoulders, and who has a very winning way with him—which

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some persons might almost stigmatise as forwardness—in a crowded thoroughfare. Towed in his wake—but by no means a jolly-boat, for I was almost stove in by elbows—I managed to reach the centre of the throng, and perceive distinctly the words, “No standing-room,” stuck up in front of the theatre.

As this piece of information did not produce the slightest effect upon those around me, I endeavoured to ignore it also, and to pass the time in taking mental notes of my neighbours. They were doubtless a rough set, and those of them who chanced to be brought before the sitting magistrate upon the following day were probably described as “ruffians” by the reporters; but they possessed a good-nature under trying circumstances which cannot be too highly eulogised. If an oath was heard here and there, it was rapped out from evil habit, without malice, just as a horse with corn in him kicks in play; and although there were one or two wicked savages, who made “rushes” from time to time, such as are sometimes

fatal to the weakly in throngs of that sort, there was a general disposition to protect the women and children, and make the crush as bearable for them as possible. It was no place, one would have thought, for the weaker sex to be in at all, but they were there in hundreds, and a young mother close to me—reduced as by hydraulic pressure to her least proportions—was feeding her baby. The child, though rather flat, did not seem to suffer any inconvenience; but the crinoline of its parent had snapped in forty places, and had lost all power to rasp people. Immediately behind me was a little man, “a tailor by trade,” as I imagine, who had ventured out under the protection of his wife. “Come,” said she, “this is getting too much of a crush for *you*, Jerry; let us be off.”

“Pooh, pooh,” replied he, sidling away, though, as he spoke—for he was a foot and a half shorter than anybody else, and stood in darkness, and an atmosphere of indescribable density—“I can bear what any *woman* can, I suppose.”

I never shall forget the tone of contemptuous

pity with which his better and bigger half responded : "Lor, Jerry !"

This lady appeared so wise and prudent, that I inquired of her whether there was no other way but this impassable one into the Theatre-Royal, and she informed me that there was a stage-door at the back of the House ; "and likewise," added she, "a gallery ; but that won't do for such as you." The aristocratic character of the H. C., although he had a billy-cock hat on, being apparent to this far-sighted female.

In the back street, the crowd was not so great, because the doors there had been advertised to close at 6.30, and had done so, as far as it was practicable. But the stage-door had been driven off its hinges, and was only restored broadways ; so that the pantomime itself, in its highest features—the flying fairies and so forth—could be distinctly seen over the top of it, and afforded unspeakable satisfaction to hundreds at a very cheap rate. In the aperture, however, stood a stout dramatic character—a demon, as I think—obscuring as much of

the gorgeous vision as possible, and flicking with the lash of a hunting-whip as many persons as he could reach with that formidable weapon. "This ain't the right door, I tell you," was his continued cry. "You must go round into Putt Street. I should be ashamed, *I* should, of seeing a pantomime for nothin'. *Here's* a mean lot! [This was addressed to the H. C. and his indignant companion.] What! you can't afford fourpence, can't you, for a seat in the gallery?" And for once his audience sympathised with this hateful personage, and exclaimed as with a single voice: "No, they haven't got a tanner between them."

Never, surely, were two gentlemen, about to occupy the stage-box of a Theatre-Royal, placed in so false a position.

Again proceeding to the front entrance, we found a policeman explaining to his hereditary enemies, the British public, that they had much better seek a pantomime elsewhere, since here, in Putt Street, it was not to be seen, even though they should stand upon one another's shoulders. The advice

was of course unheeded by those to whom it was addressed ; but I seized the opportunity to explain our position, as persons who had a right to admittance—Peris against whom the crystal bar of Eden had been most unreasonably put up—and the servant of Justice immediately admitted us, amidst howls of disapprobation. The fairy scene was shut from our gaze at first by tiers of people standing up between us and the dress-circle ; and when we had pushed our way to our private box, we found it in possession of no less than seven gentlemen and ladies. It was advertised to “accommodate” but four people, so that these individuals were all sitting upon one another’s laps, in such an interminglement of limb that it took another policeman to disentangle them. The box-keeper, with his indignant “Well, I never !” was totally unable to separate the human coil, who exclaimed, like a hydra, with one voice, that they had each paid two shillings for the accommodation, and did not think it cheap at the money—in which I very cordially agreed with them. It went to my

heart to disturb them, for they were enthralled with the action of the pantomime, as indeed was every occupant of the house. Sloping up from orchestra to ceiling was a vast bank of human faces, as close together as in those crowded photographs where we have "fifteen hundred likenesses for a penny," all eager, craving, hushed. At the back of these, and out of sight, an incessant tumult was kept up by the excluded persons—lately increased by seven—but all whom we could *see* were dumb. The stalls (for there *were* stalls) were fortunately not furnished with arms; otherwise, since two persons invariably occupied the place of one, they would have been inconveniently tight. These were patronised either by married folks, or by young persons whose engagement was sufficiently acknowledged in society to admit of their being tender to one another. The protecting arm (in a shirt-sleeve) of the swain, was thrown around his beloved object; and she, on her part, leaned her head upon his manly bosom. The position was demonstrative, but unavoidable; they had

nowhere else to put their arms and heads. These persons, like the occupants of the boxes, paid two shillings each for their very limited room ; the denizens of the pit paid eightpence, and those of the gallery, as we have already stated, a fourpenny bit.

Great, however, as the expenditure of the audience must have been, when we consider their position in life, they had still plenty of money left wherewith to purchase refreshments. The drop-curtain, which was let down oftener than usual for this very purpose, gave the nobility and gentry to understand that "Refreshments could be procured within the establishment, and without leaving their seats, as good as at any house in the neighbourhood." It also informed them where "Excellent vans could be procured suitable for parties of pleasure ; *and also a one-horse hearse.*" It was, in fact, a complete advertisement-sheet of tradespeople of the locality. Besides these, there was that metropolitan celebrity, Griffiths, with his "*Fire, Thieves, Fire!*" I wished him elsewhere

as I sat in that crowded place, and read his words. They suggested to me the awful thought—Suppose there *should* be a fire! Suppose any one of these tinsel ornaments—not to mention the poor ballet-girls in spangled muslin—should catch fire from the footlights, or the myriad gas-burners, or the red lights at the wings, what a holocaust of victims would there be! Nay, even, should a spectator repeat aloud the words before him, “Fire, Fire!” what a hideous scene of selfishness and destruction would ensue! A roar of laughter roused me from these reflections. Gammer Gurton’s cow had fallen upon the stage, through some want of concert between its inmates, and the four human legs were kicking one another in the most furious manner. The Dame and some “supers” assisted to raise the animal; but as soon as it reached the side-scenes, we beheld from our coign of vantage the two performers wriggle forth from their spotted prison, and go to fisticuffs over the empty cow. Circumstances of this sort were of course uproariously applauded; but all the

political or social "hits," by no means subtle or obscure ones either, which occurred in the course of the pantomime, were received in solemn silence. The whole audience took their pleasure sadly, although with the most perfect good-humour. The misfortunes of the stage "Bobby"—a very different character from the strong, stern men in blue who here and there looked calmly on at their caricaturist—alone excited them to mirth; they cheered when he had his head cut off, and it was put into a pie, and wildly clapped their hands when he was turned out, thin and flattened, from the mangling machine. It seemed to me, however, that this antagonism was merely conventional; that the mass of spectators entertained no more genuine animosity against the guardians of the peace, than do the boys who welcome a Guy Faux against their fellows of the Roman Catholic persuasion. No; what the fifth of November is to his Holiness the Pope, such is Boxing-night to the policeman; it is his time of trial and popular condemnation; but his execution only takes place

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in effigy, and means nothing after all. Within the walls of the Theatre-Royal, Putt Street, I did not hear one single exclamation of anger or of coarseness; nor was there any spectacle beheld from our stage-box—unless it were shirt-sleeves—which the most modest lady in the land (although I do not say the most prudish) had any need to blush at. This Home Correspondent, who is himself as sensitive as a Vestal Virgin (and even more afraid of fire), never changed colour once.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE ICE.

MAY this 10th of January, whereupon the Home Correspondent begins this paper—upon which, for the first time for a fortnight, his stony fingers have been able to hold a pen—be henceforth a festival among readers; and yet not a white day, for the frost is gone, and, by comparison, a very summer has succeeded it. Ever since last year (or December 31), the Londoner has been obliged to restrict his washing within continental limits, for the water has not “come in” at all. The turncock, who, in ordinary weather, is considered a useless functionary, something like an aquatic beadle, whose duties nobody understands, has of late become a person of importance.

His deputy—for it is not to be supposed that so great a man would do any work himself—has been the cynosure of all neighbouring householders. When would his Eminence please to come and turn on the water from the main at the top of the street ? has been literally *the* great question of the day. It is understood that he will ring a bell in the public thoroughfare, to give notice when that ceremony takes place ; but this he declines to do, and therefore our households are kept in a state of indescribable anxiety, and perhaps miss the favourable hour after all. The street-boys surround the unaccustomed fountains, and enjoy the spectacle ; but our unfortunate cook, who is momentarily expecting the kitchen-boiler to burst for want of its native element, is unconscious of the supply until it is too late. Under these circumstances, hot water for the hands has become a wicked luxury, and scarcely to be procured even for necessaries—such as toddy. If we have had no water, however, we have had plenty of gas, which has “escaped” in all directions, and with such

alacrity, that there has been none left at the jets. Dirt and darkness have therefore been the position of most people during the late "glorious weather;" while in the case of those few persons who possess any scientific knowledge, there has been added to these disadvantages the well-grounded apprehension of being suddenly blown into the air. It has been said that the world may be divided into knaves, fools, and fox-hunters, in sly disparagement, as I conceive, of this last class of our fellow-creatures; but there is this to be asserted in their honour, that at least they never rejoice with the Thoughtless or Malignant upon the setting in of Frost.

It has been my painful mission to make personal observation of the behaviour of the Londoners upon the ice, and I have fulfilled it conscientiously. Some Home Correspondents would have sat at home, knees and nose over the fire, and contented themselves with amplifying the details of "The Weather and the Parks" in the *Times* newspaper; but though the Path of Duty—to which I have

once before made some allusion—were a Slide over thin ice, I should not hesitate, I hope, to follow it to the bitter end.

Upon entering Kensington Gardens from the north-east in severe frost, the most striking peculiarity in the foreground is the mass of persons collected around Negretti and Zambra's huge thermometer. I imagine the British public believes that this instrument possesses the power of imparting heat; for they spread their hands in front of it, and speak of it with much the same sort of awe with which a Parsee might allude to the Sun.

"What do it *say* now, Bob?" inquired one unscientific fellow-countryman of another within my hearing.

"Don't know," replied the friend appealed to; "and what's more, I never do know. . I thinks you must rattle him and tap him before you get him to say anything; and you see one can't do that, because he's caged up."

"Ay, so he is," assented the first speaker, rather

approvingly, as if such an instrument might be dangerous if at large. "And what's that other thing, Bob, with a nob of glass at the end of him?"

"Well, I don't know which is which," responded Bob, with the tone of a man who has got some information to impart at last; "but I can tell you *this*: one on 'em 's a barometer, and the other's a thermometer. The difference between 'em is, I believe, scarcely worth naming, being about the same as between a crocodile and a halligator."

I was setting down the heads of this conversation upon my way to the "Long Water," when I was suddenly surrounded by four ruffians, armed with weapons tipped with iron.

"Try a pair o' skates, sir? 'Ave an hour on 'em? We've got a chair to sit down upon, and a nice little bit o' carpet. 'Ave an hour on 'em?"

Once in my life, I had been fool enough to put on skates, at the intercession of two of my brothers; they had insisted upon my taking more than an hour's exercise—which consisted of falling, at short

intervals, upon the back of my head—and I had only induced them to take them off upon the most solemn asseverations that I had sprained my ankle, which was happily not the case. I remembered the adventure very vividly, and therefore declined the present invitation, which was renewed about a hundred times during the morning. The banks on both sides were lined with chairs and little bits of carpet—as though an attempt had been made to *furnish* the landscape—and fellows were waiting everywhere ready to thrust a gimlet into your heel for sixpence, or even half the money. I am sure I would gladly have patronised the poor men if I had dared; for their occupation was much more praiseworthy than that of perambulating the streets, as many did, singing “We are all frozen out,” in indescribably melancholy tones. I would also have dealt with the sellers of hot chestnuts had the state of my digestion permitted me so to do. Very comfortable they looked, with their little braziers full of glowing coals; as also did the vendors of baked potatoes and “clear coffee,” about whom there

was a genial atmosphere that defied the depths of Fahrenheit.

It was pretty to see fathers with their boys, and even their dainty girls in scarlet cloaks, all coming for skates, and being enticed by such cries as, "You can all sit down at once, sir, here; we've chairs for four." Then to see the family shod amid an admiring crowd, and the little ones conducted to the water's edge, like young ducks for their first swim, and last of all Pater-familias, staggering down with "a rough" upon each side of him, and "clucking" to his giddy offspring to beware of dangerous places! The grown people, on the other hand, who were venturing upon skates for the first time, afforded a humiliating spectacle. Those who could boast of a couple of friends were attended by them, and truly they never needed friendly aid so much in their lives. They reminded the H. C. of an intoxicated person in charge of two humane policemen, or perhaps still more of a wild elephant between two sagacious tame ones. The frantic desire which they evinced to

dash themselves backwards ; the sudden diversion of both legs in opposite directions ; the expression of countenance, made up of agonised fear and a sense of overwhelming obligation, afforded a picture which might be gratifying to a gorilla, but made a man blush for his species. Sometimes a neophyte was lunatic enough to make his first essay alone, so far as personal friends were concerned, but not alone as to companions. Every street-boy on the Long Water proffered his services immediately. They encumbered him with aid as he tottered, like a swan upon dry land, to the level brink, and pretended to be pillars, as he lurched to this side and that, ere he came down headlong, and made his mark—a star—upon the cruel ice. How it came about that Hardicanute Fitztopping should have done such a thing in such a place, I know not, but I beheld him (myself unseen) put his first skates on, with these eyes. It was early in the morning—about twelve—and perhaps he thought that nobody would be up at that hour who was anybody. O for a pond in some

vast wilderness, and a boundless contiguity of shade, would have been *my* aspiration, before I ventured thus to exhibit myself; but "Toppo" (as we call him at the club) had had the temerity to come to Kensington Gardens. As I watched him, a tottering imbecile, with his glorious apparel all stained and wetted with numerous tumbles, and grasping a ragged boy by either hand, as though they were his younger brothers, I could not help exclaiming suddenly: "Hullo, Toppo, how is the ice?" He staggered for a second (but he had been doing *that* for the last twenty minutes), and then replied with a ghastly smile: "Ah, there's nothing the matter with the *ice* that I know of—except that it is uncommon hard."

"How is the ice?" is the fit and proper observation to make, of course, even if you have not the most distant intention of going on it yourself. The interest taken by the public therein is absorbing, and the Humane Society are good enough to publish hourly bulletins of the state of its health, as though it were one of the royal

family. *The ice is in a highly-dangerous state this morning*, is a favourite bulletin, and has the effect of enticing people in much larger numbers to venture upon it. It is a sort of lottery, in which there are no blanks, and the prizes are hot blankets and plenty of the best pale brandy, which are to be procured *ad libitum* upon the Society's premises by the immersed.

I have discovered a new definition for Man, which I believe to be most valuable. Man is "a skate-wearing animal," which distinguishes him from all others, with the trifling exception of a cat in walnut-shells. That sagacious creature, the Dog, gazes upon his so-called master with wonder and contempt as he flees, aimless, over the glassy surface. I saw a Newfoundland upset his owner while performing a gyration, and then, snatching up his stick, carry it off to land, as though in practical reproof of his making such a fool of himself. It was a lesson to humanity at large, and beholding immediately afterwards the Rev. Pyx Oriel, in silk waistcoat and stiffest of ties, waltzing back-

wards in the space devoted to the Skating Club, I applied it to *him*. What would his congregation think of him, if they could have then witnessed his eccentric evolutions? How could they ever listen respectfully to the arguments of a gentleman whom they had seen proceeding on one leg for fifteen minutes, in what I may well call "a vicious circle?"* I should not have been the least surprised had he joined in the hurdle-race. This amusement consisted in placing obstacles, formed of the *débris* of ice and earth, across the Serpentine, over which the skaters of both sexes leaped in their headlong course. Their marvellous speed and bird-like gliding could not but extort your admiration; or, shutting your eyes as the fleeting throng swept by, you might easily imagine the groaning and girding of the laden ice were the threats of the pent-up water-spirits.

Nothing, on the contrary, could be more melancholy than the attitude of the Web-footed—the

* The bystanders were for the most part of the "roughest" description.

legitimate feathered inhabitants of the flood—who, huddling together for mutual warmth, bewailed, in quacks and shrieks, the inexplicable catastrophe which had befallen them. These were the true “frozen-out” individuals, and I should much like to have had the swan’s opinion, written with his own quill, of the nature of his situation. Conceive one’s being shut off from *land* some fine morning by some transparent obstacle, which it was nevertheless impossible to remove!

In harmony with my usual ill-luck, I was so unfortunate as never to behold a fellow-creature immersed, although I watched for the incident unremittingly. I made friends with every man in a cork-jacket, and lingered in the neighbourhood of their ice-ladders until my nose turned blue, but nothing came of it, except chilblains. The sole information I extracted worthy of record was that, when a party went “in” in St. James’ Park, people were always more ready to help him than anywhere else. I set this remarkable fact down in my note-book, and after deep reflection upon the

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matter, inquired of my informant as to what he thought was the reason of this. The ideas of an uneducated but observing person are always valuable, and I was curious to see whether he attributed the local philanthropy to the character of the inhabitants, or to the influence of the neighbourhood of their sovereign.

“Well, you see,” replied the guardian of the public safety, “St. James’ have got a concrete bottom, so that there’s no mud to choke a party; and besides, they knows as its nowhere more than five feet deep. Now, in the Serpentine, they’re ready enough to hook a fellow-cretur’ out, but they do it with a pole, from terror firmer.”

In St. James’ Park, however, I witnessed a spectacle calculated to touch most feeling hearts. To keep the public off a certain ornamental island, to which nature has now formed a bridge, a park-keeper is placed upon it, of imposing size and aspect. He is bound to stay there as long as the ice remains strong enough for the enemy to cross upon it; but what will he do when it is *not* strong

enough? There must be a long interval between the period when it is not safe for ordinary folks—far less for him—and when it will admit of a boat being sent for this unhappy officer. The population of Westminster will therefore have the advantage of beholding how a solitary human being conducts himself when cut off from his fellows. In that park-keeper they will behold a Robinson Crusoe reduced to the condition of primeval humanity. They will witness his devices for procuring food and fuel; he will rub dry sticks together until they emit a spark, and roast the unwary duck or foolish fowl. It is to be hoped that he may at least be rescued before he is reduced to dress himself in their skins. "Fishing," says a Notice immediately opposite to him, "is strictly forbidden;" but Necessity has no Park Regulations, and we shall perhaps perceive him, sitting like a Greenlander, beside a hole in ice, watching patiently for the seal; the cygnet he will probably have cooked already.

Shaking from me as far as possible these gloomy

forebodings, I turned to watch an agile gentleman, who, it was rumoured, was cutting his name out upon the ice. If this were correct, it was a very long name, and I was wondering to myself as to what he would do if he had any *is* and *ts* in it—for he could surely never dot and cross *them*—when my arm was suddenly pinched in a familiar manner, and I beheld Mr. Richard Sergeant. He had been shaking my *hand* for some considerable time, but it was far too cold to be aware of it.

“Now, you are going to put all this into print,” said he. “Don’t contradict me, because I know it. Yet this is nothing to what occurs at night-time—nothing whatever. The scene is then like fairy-land, bless you: a blaze of party-coloured light sheds——”

“Have you ever *seen* it?” interrupted I, for I know Mr. Sergeant well.

“Why, no,” returned he, hanging his head; “I haven’t seen it myself; but I’ve no objection to see it. Let us go together to-night.”

So I asked him to dine with me that evening.

After dinner, in order to preserve us from the rigours of the expedition we had in view, I caused a bottle of elder wine to be heated. My friend had never tasted that homely but cheerful drink before, and he was pleased to like it exceedingly; so we brewed another saucepanful—and I confess it with shame—even a third. “The beauty of it” was, as Mr. Sergeant observed, that “it was quite impossible to take too mush of a liquid of that sort.” I could have taken my oath that he said “mush;” but being his host, I forbore to make any observation. I was obliged, however, to remind him, when we emerged into the cold air, that he had omitted to bring out his hat with him. He ascribed this act of forgetfulness to the toast, which we had dipped, according to custom, into the fragrant wine. “Toast in strips,” he explained, “always had that peculiar effect upon him; not dry toast, nor buttered toast, nor yet Anne——” After a long interval, and with a great effort, he ejaculated, as if the expression had been extorted from him by some passing object, “Chovy toast!”

I took my dear friend's arm, and drew him in the direction of the Serpentine.

"Come," said I, "we shall be late for the torches and the dancing."

"I see the torches dancing," remarked he, referring, I regret to say, to the gas-lamps in the Bayswater Road. "I see a policeman skating, and an omnibus upon a slide."

After this I desisted from my purpose of witnessing the Torch-light fête, and took Mr. Sergeant home.

CHAPTER XIII.

A JUVENILE PARTY.

THERE are three "distances," as painters call them, of domestic trouble, one beyond the other, in which Man, being mortal, is likely to find himself.

The first is the bondage of matrimony simple. I say "simple" because in Mohammedan countries it is permitted to marry more than one wife, while in our own the precept, that "no man can serve two masters," is happily insisted upon by the Law.

The second is the position of Paterfamilias encumbered with female children.

The third is that of Paterfamilias harassed with boys.

The writer of these words is in the middle dis-

tance ; there is, he knows, a deeper depth beyond, and from that knowledge he has sometimes reaped satisfaction, at others derived terrors which it took months to prove imaginary. I have often seen the male children of my friends, in charge of their natural guardians, with heartfelt gratitude for my own freedom from such inflictions ; but I have never known, until the experience about to be narrated, how much indeed I had to be thankful for. Let our title lack a wearer after our noble self ; let our landed estates descend by entail to the offspring of our hated cousin ; but oh, ye stars of nativity, O *Juno Matrona*, save me, save me from being the father of a boy !

Girls are troublesome enough at times. I have no desire to exalt them into unmitigated blessings ; I look upon them rather as “ escapes from boys ; ” but they are tender and affectionate, and, by comparison, easily subjugated. One can drive six-in-hand of them—which is exactly the number fallen to my share—harnessed to the domestic chariot, easier than a boy in single harness. It is pleasant

to see them run willingly up and down stairs on messages ; and flock to meet one, and take one's hat and gloves, on coming home from business. I am an oldish bird, not easily caught by chaff, but my little girls can wile almost anything out of me. I find myself going with them to the pantomime—which I consider to be a medley of stupid jokes and meaningless noise—at two o'clock in the afternoon, when I ought to be in the city ; and I have come home in an omnibus so laden with toys upon a Christmas-eve, as to be publicly objected to by my fellow-passengers. When one marries after forty, as I did, one is more induced to make a fool of one's self in this way, and the younger the child is, I think the more power the little darling has over one. My beloved Mabel, aged four, and called May for brevity and dearness, pulled my wig off the other day in the presence of persons of distinction of both sexes, and yet I had not the heart to scold her. I would certainly have put a boy to death, to slow music, for hinting that I wore such a thing.

It was Mabel, I am afraid, who let me in for the juvenile party. "Papa, dear, I want a dudenile tarty," was her observation one morning when she came in, as usual, to superintend my shaving operations; and I, thinking that she meant something to eat, said: "Very well; then you shall have it." This concession, made under the greatest misapprehension, was held by the rest of the family, including even the wife of my bosom, as a promise; and there was no peace for the present writer until it was fulfilled. I did not myself entertain any great apprehensions of the result. I thought that half-a-dozen little girls would be invited to play for a few hours with our own, and that they would have cake and wine, and go away again. I certainly did not anticipate any personal inconvenience from their coming. I intended to arrive at home from the City an hour earlier than ordinary, in order to see the young folks enjoying themselves, and then to dine as comfortably as usual, with my digestion assisted by the consciousness of having performed a domestic duty with a good grace. When, there-

fore, my wife observed at breakfast, upon the morning of the festal-day: "My love, we must dine at twelve o'clock to-day, if you please," the suggestion took my breath away.

"At twelve o'clock at night or at noon?" inquired I sarcastically.

"Well, my dear, at noon. I know you hate dining-out of all things, so I have managed that we shall *get* a dinner—but it will be rather a scramble. And they will be taking the furniture out of both the drawing-rooms, and the school-room must be given up for the early tea; so that we must dine, I am afraid, down stairs in the servants' hall."

"And why not here in the dining-room?" asked I, aghast at these arrangements.

"Why, you dear silly old man, *of course* the dining-room table will be all set out for supper long before twelve o'clock; and as for your study"——

"You don't mean to say, madam, that my *study* will not be sacred!" ejaculated I, laying down the

Times newspaper, to part with which, at such a time, no light thing would induce me.

"Dear papa's 'tudy upthide down," observed the intelligent Mabel, who, as usual, had taken up her post, in expectation of dainties, at my knee.

I rose in alarm, and sought my sanctuary, to behold with my own eyes the extent of the damage. The sacred apartment had already been turned into a dressing-room. My desk and papers were thrust into a corner, and their place upon the table occupied by a looking-glass and combs and brushes. The genius of Discomfort had rendered in twenty minutes the snuggest apartment in the house as cheerless as a hairdresser's back room.

"Good Heavens!" cried I, "who is it who demands these sacrifices? Cannot half-a-dozen of the girls of my friends Jones and Robinson be entertained without all this fuss? When we lived in the country, my house was never turned topsy-turvy in this manner."

"Because in our country-house there was lots of room, my love," returned my wife. "A juvenile

party in London requires a good deal of preparation, and it is necessary to economise our space."

"But, my dear madam," expostulated I, "you don't mean to say that six extra girls, however preposterous may be their crinolines, require"——

"There are more than six," observed my wife, sententiously; "you know you promised Mabel a juvenile party."

"How many, then, are coming *in all*?" gasped I, with anxiety. "Tell me the worst—that is, the most that are likely to come."

"Well, it is impossible to say, some mothers are so stupid about answering invitations; but we are sure of three-and-thirty at least."

"Three-and-thirty little girls coming to-night, madam! What! *They're not all girls*. Do you mean to tell me that you have asked any horrid boys?"

"Well, my dear love, you wouldn't have been so absurd as to give a juvenile party composed entirely of one sex. The girls would not enjoy it without the boys."

"I am sorry to hear it," replied I despondingly. "At what time do they all go away?"

"Now, I do hope you are not going to desert us," exclaimed my consort, laying her fingers affectionately upon my arm. "*We depend upon you for providing amusement, you know.* The master of the house always does that. He either 'dresses up' "——

"Dresses up!" ejaculated I, indignantly. "What do you mean by that, madam?"

"Why, he pretends to be a beggarman, or a Bengal tiger, or something of that sort; and if he doesn't mind running about on all-fours "——

"But if he *does* mind, madam," interrupted I with sternness—"if he declines, at his time of life, to expose himself to any description of ridicule, what does he do then?"

"Well, then, of course, he goes out into the town, and hires a *Conjuror*, or a *Punch and Judy*, or a *Magic Lantern*. There are lots of shops which send out these sort of people."

"What sort of shops, madam?" inquired I with

the calmness of despair. "I will do anything in reason; but I never happened to hire a Conjuror in my life."

"The toy-shops, of course; or you may hire one at the *Mausoleum*—as I saw advertised in the newspaper some time ago—that is a very good place to get one, I should think."

"The *Mausoleum* is shut up," returned I, sulkily, "and its dreary entertainments are closed by the bankruptcy of its proprietor."

"Yes, but another man has got it now, and you will find what you want there all the same. And now, my love, if you wouldn't mind perhaps you'll leave us to ourselves a little, because we want the room."

"Then you turn me out of the house, in short, do you? Well, you will not see me back again at twelve o'clock, madam, I do assure you. I shall take my dinner elsewhere, since a proper meal at home is denied to me."

"There's a darling love," responded my wife, embracing me tenderly. "I knew he would, if it

was only properly put before him. For once and away, we really shall get on better without you. You will find us all anxiously waiting for you about four o'clock, and supper will be ready for the grown-up people—after the children have had theirs—at nine o'clock precisely."

"The grown-up people, Mrs. P.—why, this is the first time I have heard of *them* !"

"Well, of course, there must be *some* grown-up people, my dear, unless you prefer to apply for some policemen, to keep order. And my uncle Chutney—you know how violent he gets if we don't ask him to every sort of entertainment we give—I was obliged to send *him* an invitation."

"Colonel Chutney at a juvenile party!" ejaculated I, throwing my hands up; "why, he'll be using bad language before the children."

"Yes, my love, I am afraid he will; but, then, fortunately, he always swears in Hindustanee. Now, don't you be later than four o'clock; there's a dear man. And here's your hat, and here are your gloves; and don't forget the Conjuror."

Thus was I turned out of my own house, and driven remorselessly to the *Mausoleum*. That place of public amusement has not a cheerful appearance even under the most favourable circumstances, but I thought its Grecian portico never looked so lowering as upon the present occasion. The porter smiled a ghastly smile as I set foot in the entrance-hall, for I was the first pleasure-seeker who had darkened its threshold that morning, and informed me that the Experiments connected with the Galvanic Battery were about to commence in the western corridor. Declining to have my spirits further depressed by any such spectacle, I asked, with some magnificence of manner, to see the Proprietor. "I wish," said I, "for a personal interview upon a matter of business."

"You ain't a-going to take the place, are you, sir?" inquired the porter, rubbing his hands in a propitiatory manner. "I've been here a many years, sir, and 'ope I may still keep the situation. I could show you certificates from three-and-

twenty as 'ave had the *Mausoleum* at one time or another."

"I have not a doubt of it, my good man," returned I; "and each of them, I believe, had a certificate of their own to show from Mr. Commissioner Fonblanque. I am only come about hiring a Conjuror for a Juvenile Party."

"O dear me, sir," replied the porter, "you will not get anything of that sort here. We used to be in that way at one time, but we are working under quite a different system now. We are all for practical science, *we* are, and the elevation of the public intellect."

"Oh, then, you don't let out a *Punch and Judy* nor a *Magic Lantern*, of course?"

"O dear, no, sir," cried the porter, looking round suspiciously, as though the gigantic pillars of the vestibule themselves had ears. "Oh, pray don't mention no such things as that. If you wanted an Electrifying Machine, or even a Horrery——"

"Thank you," said I, "very much, but I don't

think that that would do at all." And I left the melancholy porter watching for a scientific pleasure-seeker, and wandered on upon my dreadful errand elsewhere. Having selected a mammoth toy-shop, where the Noah's Arks in the windows were about the size of the real houses in my own neighbourhood, I walked in, and inquired for a magician on hire.

"What," said I, "is your usual charge for the loan of a conjuror for an evening?"

"Well, sir," replied the man of toys, "we can let you have a very good one for three guineas."

"That is a great deal of money for tricks," observed I.

"The whole apparatus is included in that sum," remarked the other persuasively, "and the sugar-plums he distributes are warranted genuine."

"Still," said I, "I think your conjuror is a little dear."

"We have them of all descriptions," answered the proprietor, in a less respectful tone; "some of them go out as low as ten and six."

"Those must be professors of a very inferior kind, I conclude," observed I, wishing him to contradict me above all things. But the master of the magi only shrugged his shoulders, and threw out his hands contemptuously. "I understand you," said I; "they would only be just clever enough to steal the spoons. Now, do you let out a Punch and Judy?"

"Two, ten, six," responded the proprietor curtly; "or without the Dog Toby, two guineas."

Now, I had heard of the play of *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark, but of Punch and Judy without Dog Toby, I had never heard.

"A man with a monster magic lantern would be how much?" inquired I.

"A guinea and his expenses," returned the proprietor, less respectfully than ever.

"Then let him be at my house by six o'clock," said I; and I presented my card of address.

Having made an early dinner with great discomfort at a chop-house, and feeling intensely fatigued with walking about, instead of doing my

business as usual in the City, I returned home at about half-past five. I let myself softly in: and passing on tiptoe the drawing-room, from which proceeded a tumult of juvenile revelry, I found myself safe in my dressing-room, where there is a little bed, on which I determined to take forty winks, to strengthen me for the festivities to follow. I had taken off my peruke, in order that this interval of repose might be more enjoyable, and was about to put on my dressing-gown, when I heard the sudden clapping of a pair of tiny hands, and a shrill voice, like that of a malignant fairy, observed,

“Oh, my, if he don’t wear a wig!”

A diminutive boy, in blue velvet knickerbockers and pink stockings, whom I suppose I had awakened from slumber, was sitting up on the bed, and staring at me with all his might.

“What is your name?” inquired I, “you wicked boy? and how dare you come here? What is your name, I say?”

“Dunno,” returned he defiantly.

"What!" cried I; "don't know your own name? Whom do you belong to?"

"Par."

"And why are you lying in my bed with your horrid boots on?"

"I don't like the people downstairs," responded the imp. "I want my supper."

"Why, you have only just had tea, have you not?"

"Tea's nothing. I want my supper, I say."

I rushed out of the room, and screamed, "Nurse, nurse!" over the balusters as loud as I could scream.

There was a trampling of many feet, a rustling of many crinolines, and not one nurse, but what seemed to be a legion of them (there were eighteen, I believe, in the house at that moment), came rushing up the stairs. I stood upon the landing, holding the strange boy by the collar at arm's-length, and demanded that he should be delivered to his proper guardian.

"We don't know who has the charge of him, sir,"

responded the eldest of these "young persons" severely; "but any one of us will be delighted to take to the darling;" and indeed they at once began to kiss and fondle the little creature, who, had he but been accompanied by a hurdy-gurdy, might have passed for a monkey before a committee of the Zoological Society itself. As he was borne away in a sea of curls and cap-strings, he shrieked out: "That funny old man has left his hair upon the looking-glass."

Then, for the first time, it pierced me, like a red-hot wire, that I had forgotten my wig. To remain alone with my own reflections after this circumstance was out of the question, and so I descended to the drawing-room. This apartment seemed to be filled with Marionettes—little creatures in velvet or white muslin, who seemed to have been recently bitten by a tarantula. It was no more possible to recognise an individual than any one dancing-mote in a sunbeam; and after asking one of my own girls how her father was, I gave up pretending to any particular acts of civility.

Presently, they formed a circle—a charming fairy ring—and played at a dreadful game called *The Family Coach*, wherein I sustained the part of “the wheel” with immense applause. I had to get up and turn completely round about six-and-twenty times in every minute, and the satisfaction which the boys took in witnessing the degradation of their senior was quite characteristic. In the midst of one of these revolutions, Colonel Chutney, my wife’s uncle, was announced. He has always looked down upon me and my family; but the look of contempt which passed over his copper-coloured countenance at that moment, was absolutely withering.

What *had* become of that creature with the Magic Lantern?

At last he came, with his three-legged stand for the apparatus, with his “comic and sentimental slides,” with his “portable sheet, which can be put in any drawing-room, without injury to the most delicate papering.” Then a temporary darkness fell upon us, accompanied by a priceless silence,

which lasted nearly half a second, and was atoned for by vociferous raptures, following upon what the exhibitor described as the first "hoptical hillusion." The most popular representations were, I am afraid, those which Mr. Ruskin would have found most fault with: pictures of gentlemen with elongated chins and exaggerated noses; and when a bald person of repulsive appearance was introduced, and a shrill voice exclaimed: "There's that funny man again, who left his wig upon the dressing-table," there was a perfect hurricane of applause. Scarcely less embarrassing was the remark of our own Mabel, who, upon the first appearance of the Flying Cupid, ejaculated with unwonted distinctness "Poor, poor!* It dot no tothes on."

The performances were slightly marred by the continued appearance of the boy in knickerbockers between the company and the objects represented; he declined to sit on a chair like other folks, but

* An expression of pity; and therefore not in use, as I should imagine, among male infants.

lay in wait upon the carpet like a wild animal, and sprang upon any optical illusion that took his fancy, under the impression that he could grasp it, though he succeeded only in pulling down the sheet. Nobody present even pretended to any authority over him. He had been brought by somebody, with the message that he was "to be left till called for," and a horrible suspicion began to take possession of my mind that I was the victim of a child-dropper. It certainly was only natural that the parent of such a boy should endeavour to get rid of him by any means ; but that he should have dressed him up in blue velvet knickerbockers and pink stockings, and dropped him, for good and all, at a juvenile party, was a most unpardonable device. Would the workhouse take him in after 8.30, I wondered ? Or would it be better to give him in charge to the police for obtaining supper under false pretences ! As the evening grew on, his evil characteristics multiplied. He clamoured for something to eat, and had to be taken down stairs and fed before the proper time. This did not prevent him, however,

from proceeding with his meal while the others took theirs, or prolonging it when they had concluded. In the meantime, Colonel Chutney, C.B., was inveighing in an unknown tongue against all young people, and demanding that the grown-up folks, or at all events himself, should not be kept waiting any longer. He refused to give the servants time to re-arrange the table, but sat at the head of it, in front of the turkey, with a carving-knife and fork in his fingers, like a griffin *rampant*. I did not dare occupy that position myself, my whole attention being concentrated upon this hateful boy. He was perpetually jumping up to procure some novel dainty, and broke three plates of our best dinner-service in a struggle to snatch the flowers out of the *epergue*. I watched him rove from bonbons to lobster salad with malignant joy.

The front door-bell had been ringing ceaselessly for half an hour, and troop after troop of little ones had departed, muffled and cloaked, with their faithful domestics, but neither cab nor carriage, nor nurse nor footman, had come for that boy. He

buzzed about in his blue velvet knickerbockers and pink stockings, like some gorgeous tropical insect, inimical to the repose of man; and when all his contemporaries were gone he returned to the supper-table, and devoured plateful for plateful with Colonel Chutney, C.B., and the grown-up people. As for me, all appetite had fled with the contemplation of him; and I listened for the wheels of his possible chariot with an absorbing anxiety. He had just announced his intention of partaking of brandy and water with Colonel Chutney, C.B. (who never concludes an evening without that grateful medicine), when the long-looked-for chariot came. I do not know whether it was that exact description of carriage; any vehicle sent for that boy, from a costermonger's cart to the state-coach of the lord mayor, would have been equally welcome; but a female servant of unmistakably "Irish extraction," came with it, and demanded Master Dunno. A little mistake, she said, had occurred, it seemed, as to the number of the house, and she was afraid that she had left "the darlin'"

at the wrong evening-party. But she supposed that it didn't much matter; her young master had evidently enjoyed himself; and all juvenile "trates" were pretty much alike.

If they are—if they really *are*—I can only say it is a most fortunate circumstance that Christmas, with its Juvenile Party, only comes once a year.

CHAPTER XIV.

A FAST-DAY.

TIME was when the British public not only “took their pleasure sadly” at times ordained by the church as epochs of mortification, but for the most part abstained from taking it at all. Passion-week, for instance, until very lately, closely resembled that ideal period, so familiar to the sporting world, entitled “a week of Sundays.” Nothing beyond those most unexhilarating of spectacles called Orreries, and perhaps a panorama or two of the Holy Land, was offered to the metropolitan sight-seers in the way of amusement. The theatres were closed; the street-music was confined to the church-bells; and all the wicked people who wanted pleasure on Ash-Wednesday

went into the country by early trains. We have changed all that now. Whether we have imported Continental notions to our great spiritual detriment, as some say, or whether we have merely broadened our sympathies, without at all losing sight of true religion, as others contend, it is quite certain that the majority of London folks do not treat humiliation-days as they used to do. Perhaps they wish to exhibit a proper and Protestant abhorrence of the papal faith in thus ignoring them ; but whether they are actuated by that high motive or some lower one, a fast-day and a feast-day have come to have a very similar signification; the Holy Day, with the masses at least, has become a Holiday. With the Upper Ten Thousand, things still remain pretty much as they were ; so that the two great classes into which, notwithstanding all change, this great city is still divided—namely, the Rich and the Poor—spend their fast-days very differently: there is the old style, and there is the new style. Far be it from me to decide where doctors, even of divinity,

differ so widely. It is the amiable desire of this Home Correspondent to become the best-hated writer in England, if possible, by telling the truth. You may find what fault with your camera, my friends, you please, but the photographs shall be taken from the life. If the objects are displeasing, I did not make them so ; and if any of you think that the representation is libellous, bring your action against the Sun Fire Office, which is alone responsible for the damage.

Upon the 25th of March 1864, I arose as usual some time after six o'clock, with the excellent intention of watching how my fellow-creatures behaved themselves throughout the day, and putting my observations into print. This employment is the nearest approach to the spy system which has yet been introduced into this country, and it is rapidly gaining ground. I never find myself (in my character as H. C., of course, for otherwise I "go nowhere") in any place of public resort without perceiving others unmistakably engaged in the same infamous profession; listening to

conversation that is not intended for them ; putting questions to official persons in a careless manner, and then going into a corner to write down their replies ; regarding all things with supercilious yet hungry eyes, and not enjoying themselves a bit. I know them, although they don't know *me*, but set me down perhaps as a country gentleman of independent means, who would be all the better for a year or two of Mr. Banting's system.

"Tut, tut," says one, "what has all this to do with the matter on hand?"

My good sir, it is evident that you do not belong to the upper section of society, or you would not be so very anxious to begin your fast-day. *You* are not the sort of man who has hot cross-buns for breakfast, which I believe to be the most deadly food, with one exception, that can be taken into the human œsophagus. If the œsophagus is not the right place for it (for I have my doubts), then it is all the more likely to get there. Hot bread is bad enough, but hot *buns* ! and for breakfast ! Who was the cruel fanatic

that fixed upon such an engine of mortification ? I have hinted that there was one article of food—I do not say “of consumption,” because it is coherent, lumpish, and insoluble—that is even worse than hot cross-buns. This is salt-fish with parsnips. “There was a certain Francis Battalia,” says Dr. Bulwer, “a true Lithophagus or stone-eater, who would take for nourishment nothing but three or four pebbles in a spoon once in twenty-four hours, and a draught of beer after them. . . . I examined this man with all the attention I could. I found his gullet very large, his teeth exceedingly strong, and his stomach lower than ordinary, which I imputed to the vast number of flints he has swallowed. . . . I used the lancet on him : his blood had little or no serum, and in two hours became as fragile as coral.” This was just the man for your hot-cross buns and salted fish with parsnips ; but for ordinary folks, I contend they are not wholesome. It is not my business to interfere with ecclesiastical ordinances. I know a very

worthy young woman who abstains from treacle with her suet-pudding during certain seasons of the church, as being a meritorious act of self-denial. This, as it happens, does not hurt her; treacle, whether pure or with brimstone, is unessential to her good health. But the fast-day fare of the orthodox is really a serious matter. Why should digestion be made the standard of devotion? I asked myself this question many times during the 25th of March, and especially during the night which followed it. I had my hot buns for breakfast, of course, and there were plenty to spare for my friend Mr. Richard Sergeant, who dropped in with a request that I would accompany him to a certain fashionable chapel, where the Rev. Softe Sawder was advertised in all the papers to preach that morning.

"My dear sir," said I, "I am going to my own parish church close by, as is my usual custom; and in the afternoon I propose to visit the Crystal Palace, to see my friends the public enjoying themselves after their manner."

"That is *one* way of spending a fast-day," observed my friend (who is the offspring of a dean) with some severity.

"Nay," said I, "it is the other way; for there are only two ways. I am sorry your sense of what is right prevents your accompanying me. I am not without scruples about the matter myself; but you know I am a Home Correspondent, and have public duties."

"Oh! yes; a pretty excuse," returned Mr. Sergeant so bitterly, that it was easy to perceive he would have given a good deal to have had the like apology. "I suppose there will be dancing and drinking, and all sorts of ribaldry."

"I am going to see," returned I calmly. "Take another hot-cross bun."

"Look here," quoth this irresolute creature. "If you will come with me to Softe Sawder, I will go with you to the Palace of Crystal. There."

"No," said I, "no. I cannot stand your fashionable preachers. I never heard anything practical from them in my life; they are blowers of word-

bubbles, that is all. My clergyman here is a good old soul, who knows what he means, and his congregation understand him. I have no itching ears."

"But Softe Sawder is the most practical preacher you ever heard. That is his great peculiarity. I guarantee that you will have an admirable discourse."

"Will you guarantee that I get a seat?" returned I, wavering.

"Yes, I will," returned Mr. Richard Sergeant; "that is, if we start at once. It is now ten, and the service begins punctually at eleven; we must step out."

"But we shall get there in a quarter of an hour," reasoned I, aghast at the notion of a quick walk after four large buns. "Surely we shall be much too soon."

"Not an instant," returned my friend, putting on his hat. "There is no standing-room within ten minutes of the commencement. The free seats are filled directly the doors are open."

My friend had spoken the truth. The few high-backed narrow forms—certainly not called free by reason of their having any superfluous accommodation—which occupied the aisle of the fashionable chapel, had already several tenants when we arrived, and other candidates were pouring in. There was supposed to be room for three on each bench; but to have a child for one's next neighbour was esteemed a prize by stout persons, who beckoned to strange juveniles with eager hospitality, and having obtained their company, squeezed them without remorse. My companion and I were not so fortunate, but looked shillings into the eyes of every pew-opener that passed, in hopes of getting better quarters. Surely there is something hopeful in the way in which persons consent to be thus inconvenienced for the sake of hearing an eloquent divine! In very few walks of life has a man such a chance of imparting his thoughts, or of finding so many fellow-creatures willing—nay, eager—to receive them. If the manager of a theatre should contrive such Procrustean seats as we were sitting

in, I am sure he would find but few persons to fill them. And yet, how envied we were by a crowd of persons, elegantly attired, who could not obtain seats at all, but stood in drafts and doorways, content with those fragments of discourse that reached them when the preacher "rose upon the wind of doctrine" higher than usual.

As for the British pew-holder, however, I confess I was impressed unfavourably by his demeanour. Whatever price he may have paid, by the season, for his position, he took it all out in self-complacency and superciliousness. In my own ordinary place of worship, after the service has begun a reasonable time, those without seats are admitted into the pews, as a matter of course; but in the present case, matters were very different. Again and again would a pew-opener lean over the door of some half-tenanted pew, and request permission to introduce some seatless stranger, only to meet with frowns and shakes of the head.* The notion

* There was one individual of about sixty, the sole tenant of a pew of considerable size, who came under my immediate

of a gentleman in church, of all places in the world, behaving in this manner—with a picture of the Good Samaritan actually throwing “warm gules” upon his shirt-front from the painted window—would have been really humorous, but for the sad seriousness of the matter; what stolid ignorance of the cause of their being in that edifice at all, must possess such persons! What a blurred and indistinct idea must they entertain of the Great System which they flatter themselves they support by paying their pew-rents! How delicately the Rev. Softe Sawder must have

observation; him no official had ventured to ask for room, probably because they knew him too well; so he sat surrounded by Space. Presently, however, a young lady of great personal attractions, who was standing in the aisle with her mother, aroused this gentleman's benevolence. He nodded to her in a condescending manner, and when she took no notice of that, he beckoned to her, at the same time opening the pew-door. Upon this she bowed, and accepted his offer of a seat; her elderly relative attempted to follow, whereupon this astounding individual quietly reached forward, and shut the pew-door between them with a smack, leaving mamma outside. I never felt so much inclined to write to the *Times*.

picked his pastoral way, never to have suggested to these people even the first germs of Christian conduct! The art of How not to do it, however, was in this reverend gentleman's sermon carried to perfection. There not being one single miserable sinner present in that fashionable chapel whose income was less than five hundred a year, he depicted the vices of the poor in glowing colours; while the rest of his discourse was solely directed against "the Infidel"—not present. Never did I behold a congregation, I do not say more orthodox, for I hope I am orthodox myself, but more obviously conventional in every particular. He might just as well have directed his efforts against the tenets of the prophet Mohammed.*

"Sergeant," said I impressively, when we got into the natural air outside, "this is the last time"——

"Well, well," said he, "I know what you are

*And yet there were numbers of good people taking notes of what was said, as though poor Softe Sawder had been St. Chrysostom.

going to say. I confess Softe Sawder was not very practical this morning ; but last Sunday I never heard anything more excellent ; and if you will only try once more, say *next* Sunday, I will guarantee that he is good again."

"My dear friend," remarked I gloomily, "I dare say you are right. It is only that I am unfortunate. When I happen to make one of a fishing-party, we never catch anything by any chance ; but the day before, I am assured, they caught seventy-three dozen ; and the day after was one totally unexampled in the way of piscatory success. So is it with me and the fashionable preachers. I will never leave my parish church again."

"Come home and lunch with me," replied Mr. Sergeant gaily ; "after some salt-fish and parsnips, you will feel quite a different being."

"I have no doubt of that," replied I ; "but I prefer to eat something that I can digest at the Crystal Palace."

The crowd at Victoria Station, about mid-day on Good-Friday, was something tremendous, and

was composed entirely of that description of persons who boast a Sunday coat. The Upper Ten Thousand have many coats, and a much larger number of our fellow-citizens have only one ; but neither of these classes were bound to hear Mr. Sims Reeves sing a song of sixpence (or very little more) in the nave at Sydenham. I believe it was the cheapest concert, considering "the talent" engaged, that was ever given, and the audience was proportionably large. Quarter after quarter struck the clocks, but still the would-be pleasure-seekers remained at that Pimlico Station, growing flatter and flatter by reason of the increasing pressure, but without losing one drop of good-humour. I cannot be persuaded that persons are very vicious who behave with this admirable patience. Here were five thousand people or so, huddled together in an open pen, with nothing to do, and conscious that their one holiday of the year was slipping away from them in that unsatisfactory manner, and yet I did not hear a single expression of irritability—far less any wicked words. Listening as usual

with all my ears, I heard Mr. Sergeant, the dean's son, freely anathematising the railway authorities for their want of punctuality, but I heard no one else. Yet it was nothing to him whether Mr. Sims Reeves should have finished his last shake or not, before we arrived ; and nothing to me, who had lost my temper long ago, as I always do when I'm kept waiting. We both received a lesson of kindness and long-suffering, which I hope was not thrown away upon us. It was quite impossible that anybody but the boys—who climbed up the iron railings, and sat delightedly on the spikes as usual—could have enjoyed this situation. The poor women, though in their Sunday clothes, had probably the only crinoline on they possessed, and they knew that it was snapping into angles ; the steel circles were becoming pentagons, hexagons, polygons of all kinds under the continued pressure. They knew that they would look ridiculous in the eyes of their husbands and lovers at the journey's end, instead of that height of fashion which they had aimed at ; and yet they kept a smiling coun-

tenance. One of them used rather a strong expression for a lady, but even that was an indication of the strength of her domestic attachments. "*Drat it!*" exclaimed she, in answer to some thought of her own, for her husband was looking the picture of patience, "what does it matter where we are, Bill, so long as you and I and the children are together?" She referred to two little creatures, reduced to the shape of pancakes, who were clinging contentedly to her skirts in the cheerful hope that something else was presently to come of their holiday beside semi-suffocation, and the thermometer at ninety degrees in the shade.

I had the pleasure of overhearing also the following conversation, which it is no discourtesy to publish, insomuch as the speakers delivered it in the highest notes of which their shrill voices were capable. They were two young gentlemen of kindred pursuits, and doubtless sympathetically attached to one another, but the envious crowd prevented any personal propinquity, and what

they had to say, they screeched like owls in a thicket.

"Haven't been down to your place, Jack, for an age."

"Ay, that's true, Joe; and why don't you? She's worth coming to look at, I can tell you. She's a real beauty, she is."

["*She!*"] thought I. "Is it possible this youth of five feet nothing can possess a wife?"

"Her eye's all right again, is it?" inquired Joe with feeling.

"Ay; and she gains flesh, too. She's a picture, I tell you; and worth coming forty mile for."

"When she was mine," returned the other——

["Then she's been in the Divorce Court," whispered Mr. Richard Sergeant.]

"I had nothin' to complain of, nothin'—and so said Sam Roberts—except that she *would* kill."

["What an abandoned flirt!" thought I. But what business had Sam Roberts to find fault with her!]

"Ay; I remember," said Jack carelessly; "her hair began to fall off about that time. It was rats, rats, rats with her from morning to night; I believe she dreamed o' rats. She is certainly the gamest little Tarrier as ever I see."

These doggy boys were talking about a terrier. They belonged to that class of persons who, as Mr. Dickens tells us, do not so much keep dogs as dogs keep them. Let us not, however, be hard upon them; they would be "horsey," perhaps, like their betters, if they had but a little more *per annum*. Only why, why were they going to the Crystal Palace, where there is not a dog to be seen, except the monitory *Cave Canem* on the threshold of the Pompeian house?

A snort of an engine, a peal of a bell, and the gates are opened, and we rush forward like the riderless horses in the Corso; it is a stampede of the middle classes. The carriages are filled in the first minute, and the fortunate occupants grin through the windows at the left-behind ones on the platform. The two little human pancakes have

not been able to come to the front with the requisite dispatch. They stand rueful, with their large eyes filled with tears, between their philosophic father and their mother, who appeals vigorously to the guard, as though that official could produce more carriages by blowing his whistle.

"Hi, mate," sings out some gentleman in the third class, who would have spoken plainer if he did not keep tobacco in his mouth ; "if you and your good lady don't mind a squeeze, we can make room for you here somehow, and take the little ones upon our knees."

This offer is accepted as frankly as it is offered. The whole family troop into the already crowded compartment ; and to judge from the peals of laughter that emanate from it during the journey, I fancy that nobody is seriously inconvenienced, after all. It was surprising, indeed, to see how lightly all the troubles of that day were borne. The Palace at Sydenham is a building of tolerable size, but fifty thousand people are as much as even it can agreeably accommodate ; and the company

on the fast-day considerably exceeded that number. The dust, the heat, and the difficulty of moving about must have robbed Art of many of its attractions. As for the concert, Mr. Sims Reeves might have been a peacock for all that ears, not long enough to have purchased "a reserved seat," could tell to the contrary; while the space adapted for the tropical plants was also most admirably fitted for persons to faint in. It is sad to think how rarely is it possible for poor folks to get as much enjoyment as the rich out of the same spectacle; but, on the other hand, they recreate themselves more thoroughly in such things as are left to them, and improvise delights of their own. Thus, where a colossal statue of Louis XIII. of France, in Roman attire, is, on ordinary occasions, seen with outstretched arm defying nature to produce his equal (which, to confess the truth, she has never done, nor, as I hope, attempted it), some humorous holiday-maker had greatly improved matters; he had given this imperious idiot something to look at, by suspending to his royal digits a pewter pot.

with a little small-beer in it ; and the transformation thereby effected was complete. The unfortunate king seemed to have become perfectly sensible of the indignity put upon him, and was beseeching gods and men that it should be taken off again. Roars of laughter from every passer-by witnessed against the calumny that denies a sense of humour to the British public.

At the same time, it must be allowed that this sense is dormant. At the foot of the gardens, the see-saws, or "Patent Invigorators," as they are called, were in active motion ; eight, at least, of both sexes seated in each, and all pulling at the ropes with such gravity as would have befitted serious sailors in a hurricane ; even when the bump came which necessarily took away their breath every half-minute, and extorted an exclamation similar to that used by paviours, it did not produce a single smile ; neither did the so-called Merry-go-round, whose occupants sat as calm and stolid upon their griffins and unicorns as the best society in a mourning-coach. But the demeanour

most appropriate to a fast-day was beyond question worn by the twenty thousand people or so who in various parts of the Palace Gardens were playing at Kiss-in-the-Ring. The component parts of this simple but popular game consist (as it seemed) of a solid crowd with a hole in it, and a few pieces of paper, which it is by no means necessary should be clean. Any gentleman might present a piece to any lady, and upon her accepting it (which almost always happened), she would start off like another Atalanta across the slopes and flower-beds, and he would pursue and capture her. This was accomplished with great decorum. Then he would lead her back, in courtesy a very Sir Roger de Coverley, into the ring, take off his hat like Beau Brummell, lift her veil as Uncle Toby might have lifted that of the widow, respectfully, nay, with reverence, and imprint one chaste salute upon her blushing cheek. I never beheld any amusement engaged in by both sexes conducted with such grave propriety; it reminded me of a minuet which I once saw my grandmother

and my great-uncle dance at a Christmas party ; only all we little ones cheered the latter performance, while the Kiss-in-the-Ring was administered amid a sort of hushed applause.

It would be a *suppressio veri* not to own that there was a case of intoxication at the Crystal Palace on March 25, 1864 ; one single (we hope he *was* single) drunken man out of 53,000 people ! —from which, if we cannot deduce a rule of sobriety, there is surely no proof by exception.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE GRAND JURY.

BESIDE planting a tree, and adding at least a unit to the rising population, there is a third duty incumbent upon every Briton who is a householder—he must serve as a juror. There are three kinds of juries, grand, special, and petty; but since for the last two you get a guinea a day, attendance upon them is considered by some to be rather a privilege than a duty. The grand jury is an institution, for belonging to which no recompense is awarded, except *kudos*—the thanks of a grateful country—and hence many persons shirk it, if they can.* Some householders never do get

* I am speaking of Londoners only: the country gentleman, whose desire is above all things to kill time, when there are no foxes, holds serving upon the grand jury as an entertainment of considerable attraction.

summoned. A guinea judiciously administered to the sheriff's officer, at a very early period of the threatened infliction, it is said, works wonders ; a stitch in time saves *nine* ; but I have no practical knowledge of this artifice. I know if one doesn't go, what happens. Three months afterwards, when the circumstance has faded from all but the Judicial mind, a letter arrives, in an infamous handwriting, to inform one that the next morning an officer and another (not an officer and a gentleman) will enter one's habitation, and seize upon any article of furniture not exceeding the value of ten pounds, and confiscate the same to our Lady the Queen, by way of fine. Conceive one's American rocking-chair, one's inlaid ivory cribbage-board, one's stuffed Himalayan pheasant in a glass case, being transferred to Buckingham Palace from one's unambitious dwelling-house in St. John's Wood ! It is probably by misadventure, however, that one does not obey one's country's call, for the Summons is of a character to terrify the most audacious recusant. It is said by the attorneys

(with reference to barristers who write books) that law suffers by any alliance with literature ; I think I may be permitted to retort, upon the authority of the subjoined document, that literature is also liable to suffer by alliance with law.

By virtue of a warrant from the Sheriff of the county to me directed, I summon you *to be and appear* before her Majesty's judges and justices at the Central Criminal Court, at Justice Hall in the Old Bailey, in the suburbs of the city of London, on Monday, &c., at Ten of the clock in the forenoon, Precisely, to *inquire, present, do, and execute all and singular those things* you shall be then and there enjoined. Whereof fail not, *as you will answer the contrary* at your Peril.

I have placed the most striking portion of this elegant literary composition in italics, but it is all more or less admirable throughout. Its composer is unknown, I believe ; but from its vague and melodramatic threats, combined with its professional iteration, I am inclined to think that some "super" at the Victoria Theatre, who is occupied by day in an attorney's office, must have thrown it off during a period of protracted intoxication.

"Whereof fail not, as you will answer the contrary:" I clung to the hope that, for the credit of Her Majesty's judges and justices, the last word at least might have been a misprint for "country," which would have rendered the sentence less unintelligible ; but such was not the case. The whole document, it will be admitted, is calculated to alarm the female mind in the highest degree ; and it chancing, in my own case, to arrive during my absence from home, the consequences to my unhappy wife, who opened it, were such as to shake her nervous centres very considerably. She thought, I believe, it was a writ for my immediate apprehension and removal to the condemned cells of Newgate Prison. The circumstance occurred years ago, but I remember it, and all that followed, as though it had happened this very week.

Upon the day and hour appointed, then, I found myself at "Justice Hall, in the suburbs of the city of London" (although no cabman would have known whither to drive under such direction),

listening to the names of my fellow-sufferers being called over by a barrister, and reiterated by an officer of the court. The barrister spoke distinctly enough, but the officer roared. It was like a pistol fired in a cavern ; there was the report, and there were three tremendous reverberations :

“ Charles Jonathan Jones.

“ Charles Jonathan Jones.

“ Charles Jonathan Jones.

“ Answer to your name, and save your fine of two hundred shillings and eightpence.”

This was the peril darkly hinted at in the mystic summons, and a good many incurred it. Enough, however, remained obedient to their country's call to make up the requisite quorum of twenty-three, and we were politely requested to adjourn to the grand jury-room, and choose our foreman. Imagine two dozen Englishmen (save one), none of whom had ever set eyes upon his comrades, requested to make election, within five minutes, of who should be his representative man for the next three days. It was a position absolutely unexampled for

embarrassment; every man looked at his neighbour in dismay and hate, as though his lips were in the act of murmuring: "This gentleman, now, appears to me to be just the sort of man for a job of this exceptional character." As for myself, I was not alarmed, for I had made up my mind, in case of any such remark being made with reference to me, to smile, and say: "It was a very fine day at present, but likely to be wet presently;" by which it would be gathered that I was much too deaf for the situation. Some born genius, however, hit upon the device of inquiring whether anybody had served as foreman before; and another gentleman, of less intelligence, having been so weak as to own he had, he was elected by acclamation. Then we trooped back into court, and were sworn to keep the Queen's secrets (none of which, however, were confided to the present writer), after which we received the judge's charge, and in that dangerous condition returned to the grand jury-room. Now, whether it was the charge which caused some of us to want to "go off," or

whether it struck one or two that it would be pleasant to evade both the fine for non-attendance and the attendance also, but no sooner was our unfortunate foreman installed in his chair of state, than applications began to be made to him for leave of absence. Like the people in the parable, one had his merchandise to attend to; and another had taken a wife, by this time in an interesting condition, and requiring his attendance at home; and a third was under a vow to be at St. Katherine's Docks by noon; so that a too good-natured chairman might have found himself without a sufficient quorum wherewith to carry on the business of the day.

In the first two or three cases, matters were made easy for us by the attendance of the solicitors for the prosecution, who knew exactly what questions bore upon the matter in hand, and put them as concisely as possible. But when these gentlemen of the law retired, and we were left to ourselves, the unfortunate ship, Grand Jury, not being A1 in undertakings of this nature, lay, as it were, a log

upon the judicial waters, beaten hither and thither by every wave of testimony. Beside this, there was mutiny on board, for one of the twenty-three laboured under the mistaken impression that he had a talent for cross-examination, and made whatever was in itself irrelevant, doubly foreign to the subject, by his curious inquiries; he would not only drink in all that the most voluminous witness had to tell us, but rendered the narrative still more impertinent by questions about his aunt and his mother-in-law; so that the rest of us had to refer to the calendar again and again, to remind us of the nature of that criminal charge from which we had strayed so far. I never was in the company of any gentleman who so strikingly reminded me of the philosopher Socrates, for tedious and microscopic inquiry, although in other respects, perhaps, the parallel was not so complete.

Then there was the too-scrupulous juryman, who, after everybody else was satisfied, begged (with the permission of the chair) "to put one question of great importance, which at present

had escaped consideration, he believed—namely, Had the witness been sworn?”—which, of course, he had. It would have been physically impossible for any fellow-creature to have entered that room upon any pretence whatever, and *not* to have been sworn. There was every convenience for taking testimony you can possibly imagine, for Christians, Jews, and even Turks; and when a Parsee came before us upon one occasion, the usher apologised, almost with tears in his eyes, that there was no instrument at hand (although I did suggest a camera) which would be obligatory upon the conscience of a sun-worshipper. However, he had something in his own pocket that *looked* like a washing-book, and had no cover, but which he protested was binding; and I hope it was.

And while speaking of the unorthodox, let me ask one question, an answer to which would greatly oblige the present writer. How is it that the business of the Old Bailey is monopolised almost entirely by persons of the Hebrew faith? Was

the old court ever a synagogue, and borrowed by the Crown for the administration of justice, upon the condition that half its officers, half its counsel, half its attorneys, and half its prisoners, should be members of the Jewish Church? I can certify that at least half its witnesses were of that persuasion, on the occasion which I have in my mind. Any gentleman of a dark complexion, and who happened to have a cold in his head, was pretty certain to be presented with the Hebrew Bible, upon his appearance in our witness-box; and thus it was that the incumbent of a certain West-end church was sworn before us with his hat on,* in spite of his white tie, and protestations that he was a clergyman of the Church of England.

On each of the two occasions when I have had the honour to serve upon the Grand Jury at the Old Bailey, the calendar has been a very heavy one, and we examined between four and five hundred witnesses. These, of course, were of all

* Members of the Jewish persuasion are sworn with their heads covered.

nations, creeds, and languages, and of almost every position in the scale of social life ; their characters, too, were as various as their pursuits : the glib and the hesitating ; the exaggerating and the cautious ; the honest and the false. It was a perfect microcosm of man (and woman) kind. The most painful to listen to, except those who were manifestly perjuring themselves, were the stammerers, whose unfortunate defect was greatly increased by the nervousness consequent upon their position. There was one poor fellow, the prosecutor, if I remember right, in some Mint case, who was absolutely unable to tell us his story because it was all about bad Change—a word that seemed to be composed of from forty to fifty syllables. A far more troublesome sort of witness, however, and one by no means deserving of pity, was the Episodical Female. I don't know what else to call a lady who, having a plain statement to make, declines to do so, under either compulsion or persuasion, but becomes voluminous to the last degree about matters which are totally extraneous. This

genus has a faculty peculiar to it, and the cuttle-fish only, of concealment by mist of its own raising. Word upon word, sentence upon sentence, story upon story arise like dust-storms, and subside in nothing whatever. It is most curious and interesting to watch this unfortunate creature twisting her rope of sand.

“It was the 13th, no, it was the 14th, yes, unless I am much mistaken, it was the 14th of March, 1858, leastways, gentlemen, you will understand it was 1859, begging your pardons; and we was a-moving, you see, because of the children, which was eleven, and another coming, and the cart was at the door. Then, says he, coming up with his arm in a sling, and as nice a-looking and honest a young man, that I will say—but fine feathers makes fine birds, and is but skin-deep—and shall I help you, says he; yes, says I, leastways if tuppence is any object, and besides, my husband, says I, who is in the sewerage, gentlemen, and a hinspector, which he may get you thirty-five shillings a week, young man, or forty, if you conduct yourself

respectable, and quite enough to marry and set up house for yourself——”

“I beg your pardon, madam,” observed the chairman, “but if you could make this story a little shorter. Now, with respect to the cap which he is said to have stolen from your house during this removal of your goods, as I suppose.”

“Not as I am aware on,” remarks the Episodical Female, drawing herself up, and speaking in an offended tone. “’Evin forbid as I should detrack from a young man’s character, being on my oath, and swore. What I says is this; Maria, says I, how did you know the shutters of the back-parlour was unfastened; Mary-Jane, which is my name, as I generally goes by, having been christened Elizabeth, but there was another in the same family, which made it awkward, I see his ’ed and his ’and.”

Foreman, despairingly: “Who is Maria?”

“She is my husband’s step-daughter, gentlemen, by his first marriage; and a useful steady girl, though I says it as shouldn’t say it, though she

ain't no blood-relation either exactly. There's a young man down at Croydon, gentlemen, in the hardware line——"

"My good woman, we cannot stand this. Answer me this plain question: Did this Maria see the prisoner steal the cap?"

"His 'ed and his 'and, sir, which had warts upon them, and rubbin' them hard with a weddin' ring, and singin' a verse or two :

' Warts is here and warts is there——' "

Foreman, sinking low in his chair, and speaking with anguish :

"We don't care whether he had warts or not. Pray tell us this, only this: Where was the stolen property found?"

Witness, with a great effort, not to be episodic :

"At No. 4, sir."

"Ah! that was the prisoner's place of residence, was it?"

"O dear, no, sir; leastways, I can speak to

the last fourteen years, ay, and fifteen, come next summer, which it's April at this present, and we was bound to whitewash one in seven, and repaper twice, except the outbuilding——”

“Ah! then No. 4 was the house to which you were removing, was it?”

“O dear, no, sir, and gentlemen, quite the contrary, we was a-moving, you see, because of No. 12, which was a-coming, saving your presence——”

“Stop, stop. Who did No. 4—the house—belong to? Do, pray, tell us that? Who owned the house where the stolen property was found?”

“A lady, sir, of the highest respectability, which her uncle is on the Board of Guardians——”

“Now, listen to me. Is this lady outside? Is she a witness in the case? Can we get at her?”

“O dear; no, sir, and gentlemen; she's at her villa residence, at Barkling in Essex, but may be telegraphed for at a moment's notice;” and so on, *ad infinitum*, until we call in the aid of the police.

It is the policeman who makes all matters clear to us. His testimony may be prejudiced, but he at least knows how to give it intelligibly. Yet he, too, like all other witnesses of humble rank, is given to use the most grandiloquent language he can lay his tongue to. He "takes an observation," of "a certain establishment," and "from information received" (unless he has gone thither "permiscuous"), is so fortunate as to catch the prisoner in the act of "tendering false coin," or, in other words, passing a bad shilling at a pot-house. All the female witnesses in such cases are barmaids, gorgeously attired daughters of Israel, who wear the spoils of the Egyptians in their ears; and they are not nervous, and it is quite a treat to hear them. Some witnesses can't hear *us*. One who is employed in a powder-mill has lost his sense of hearing through explosions (as I suppose) and we can make nothing of him at all. The too-scrupulous juryman even suggests that he has never heard the administration of the oath; and, indeed, it turns out that he had imagined he was being asked whether he had any

lucifer-matches in his pocket, which is the one great question put to persons of his profession upon entering any apartment.

There is one outlandish person (in an Admiralty case) who can express himself in no language known to the grand jury, so an interpreter is introduced, who, taking snuff, and speaking through his nose, is equally unintelligible. The too-scrupulous jurymen, over-elated by his success with the deaf gentleman, screams very loud at the outlandish witness, and is surprised that nothing comes of it.

It is very remarkable upon what easy terms people, and of business habits too, seem to part with their property to persons of whom they know absolutely nothing, and who turn out to be thieves. This probably arises from excessive competition, which disinclines everybody, from a banker to a rag-dealer, to lose a chance of extending his connection. In robberies from the person, however, there is another explanation of this phenomenon. The prosecutor is almost always described as "not drunk—no, not to say drunk; he know'd what he

was about very well; he was what you would call, sir," [addressing the foreman] "*arf-an-arf*, you know."

All this is the ludicrous side of that highly-coloured, many-figured picture which human life presents to the juryman; but the obverse is a very sad and serious one. Therein not only does Crime stand gigantesque in the foreground, naked, and not ashamed, but all the Vices throng around him: Avarice clutching its ill-gotten store so tightly, that Murder only can unloose the stiffened fingers, and Jealousy with eager eyes impatient for Revenge upon her rival, although she herself must share the punishment. These accessories are even worse than That which they surround, and out of which they gradually emerge, unexpected, abject, loathsome.

There are horrors enough of the material sort, of course: forged documents, over which the fingers may have hesitated ere they wrote their fatal falsehood; stray slips of paper, which the knave and fool in one omitted to destroy, but whereon he has

striven to imitate, a score of times, another's handwriting, that he may commit the fraud secure; tools of strange shape, unknown to honest hands, the evidence of an ingenuity perverse, which might have easily procured Competence for its possessor, and all that springs from it, and sweet Content—a home, a wife, true friends, in place of tawdry joys and traitorous companions, and the shuddering sense of the hair-suspended sword of the Law. Nay, there were knives clotted with the blood of murdered men, and bludgeons with gray hair stuck fast to them, and bottles with a little poisonous stuff still left at the bottom, from which men unknowingly had drunk to Death. But none of these things were half so sad—or so it seemed to me—as the apathy with which Father gave evidence against Son, and Son against Father, and Sister against Brother, and Wife (or she who had supposed herself to be so) against the man whom she had held to be her Husband for long years. And truly was I glad at heart when our business at the Old Bailey was over, and I had

inquired, presented, done, and executed all and singular those things which I had been then and there enjoined as a Grand Juryman.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE KNIFE-BOARD.

WHEN my Brougham is gone to the coach-makers for repairs, and the small Tiger who stands rampant at the back of my cabriolet has got a fortnight's leave to see his friends in the country, then I sometimes ride upon an omnibus; *upon*, mind, but never *in* one. I cannot submit to sit sideways among hard-breathing but silent persons, the majority of whom entertain suspicions that one of their two neighbours is picking their pocket, and that the other is working in concert with him. It is too distressing to me to witness the futile efforts of that good-natured person from the agricultural districts to ingratiate himself with the rest of the company by jocose remarks, which only

change their dark suspicions with regard to *him*, at least, into perfect certainty. It is too frightful to run the risk a second time—for it has happened to me once already—of sitting next a mother with two babes, one of whom, being discomposed by the movement of the vehicle, requires the exclusive attention of its parent, who thereupon intrusts me with the other to “hold,” as though it were a challenge-cup, and I were honoured indeed in being made the repository of such a trust.

These things, I say, are not to be endured in the finest weather; while, if it rains—when people, curiously enough, seem most to affect the interior of these conveyances—the mystical power of emitting horrible odours which an omnibus possesses, is such that nothing would induce me to brave it. I do not pretend to question the desirability of this gift; we know that the skunk and other animals are dowered in the like manner, and doubtless for some good and wise purpose; nor do I concern myself with what composition of forces may make up the aroma in question—how

much may be contributed by damp straw, how much by wet broadcloth, how much by saturated members of the human family, and how much by their umbrellas, dripping black and green and brown into a common centre; I leave that matter to the analytical chemists, for the insides of omnibuses I never use myself by any chance.

But the outside of a 'bus, let me observe, is a very different position, and one that is most charming in many respects. In the first place, it affords, by reason of its elevation, the best air in London, with the exception of that obtained by Mr. Glaisher during his metropolitan ascents, which are, after all, quite exceptional cases, and scarcely need to have been mentioned, only that I am so anxious to be fair. Secondly, it affords the best view, and that without even the above exception; for although Mr. G. may have panorama and chimney-tops in immense variety, he cannot pursue the engrossing study of mankind—inclusive, of course, of the female sex—to nearly such advantage as

can I upon the knife-board. In great thoroughfares, such as Holborn, I allow that I can only survey, with distinctness, what is going on in the first floors; but when that street is "up"—as it has been for the last twelvemonth, and probably will be for twelve months to come—and the 'busses are driven into the by-streets, the second floors, and even the attics, are exposed to my view, as clearly as though I were Asmodeus, and had lifted the roofs off. The people thus invaded are not accustomed to defend themselves from surveillance, as are the inhabitants of the dwellings that skirt our lines of railway; they have no window-blinds, or, if they have, they do not use them. They quarrel, they eat and drink, they play at dominoes, and they retire to rest, unconscious of the fact, that they are under my observation, or indifferent to it. I know of no method by which a foreigner can make himself acquainted with what is called "the inner life" of the lower classes of London—of all the grades, in fact, below that which uses Venetian blinds—so well as by

journeying to and from the City to the West End on the top of a 'bus, while Holborn is in the hands of the Commissioners of Drainage.

Diverging from that great artery at Hart Street, Bloomsbury, on the eastward route, he will find himself in a labyrinth of narrow ways, wherein, by turning himself sharply round, he will even be able to observe *both* sides of the streets; although this must not be done too rapidly, lest in the attempt to combine his information he may confuse it, through the reception of the second image upon his retina, before the first has wholly faded away. Thus, a gentleman may be shaving in the second floor of No. 9, while a lady may be trying on what I believe is termed "a skirt" in No. 140 opposite; whereupon the note book of the too observant foreigner will record that the ladies of Theobald Street use razors, and the men wear stays. He may make some statements, however, with perfect truth, which are calculated to excite astonishment even among the fellow-countrymen of those he describes, since all have not enjoyed the advantages of sur-

veying English life from a slow-moving, unexpected, and exalted point of view.

Many, for instance, will be surprised to learn that the whole population of the district of which I speak eat whelks for supper. They generally pick them out with a pin, though some will break them with the handles of their knives ; nor are pieces of shell considered an impediment to gastronomical pleasure. I *once* saw a lady crunch a whelk under her heel (and she hadn't a shoe on either), but she was in a hurry. They also consume shrimps in enormous quantities at all seasons of the year. There is a venerable individual (male) living at the corner of King's Road, second floor, front, whom I have twice observed in the act of eating shrimps *in bed*. I do not know what may be his profession, but it is certainly one that does not keep him up late at night, or interfere with what I may truly designate a healthy appetite : how often, at a dinner of eight courses, have I envied that happy, unsophisticated man ! Acres of green-meat are devoured in this neighbourhood at tea-time, which is about 4.30 P.M. Often

and often have I been an unseen witness to that deathless entertainment given by Sairey Gamp to Betsey Prig ; but I am bound to say, that after the season for that delicacy has well set in, she rarely forgets "the cowcumber." They sup the vinegar up with their knives with intense enjoyment, while my fastidious teeth are set on edge with the mere contemplation of them. How they eat radishes, too, tails and all, and celery down to the very roots ! No males are ever to be beheld at these festive scenes. Their day's work is not yet over, or, if it is, they are in the ground-floor parlour of the *Cat and Cauliflower*, where I could take a clearer observation of them, if they did not envelope themselves in such remarkably thick tobacco smoke ; or, if not there, they are in the excellent dry skittle-alley attached to the same establishment, and that dull thunder which comes up to me, as I roll by in comparative silence, is the result of their scientific "flooring."

When at home, the male inhabitants of this quarter invariably sit in their shirt-sleeves, without the slightest regard to the state of the temperature.

I believe this to be a procedure at once natural and becoming ; for although chilly and artificial myself, and therefore without any personal prejudice in favour of the custom, I have observed the same predilection to exist in certain stalwart persons of my own class in life, whose example I revere. At college, in chambers at Lincoln's Inn and the Temple, on long-vacation excursions in the country, and, in short, on all occasions when the conventionalities of life are most easily dispensed with, I have seen this desire to sit in their shirt-sleeves budding, expanding, and at last, as it were, blossoming into flower. The test of friendship with some men is, whether they can say to their host : " I know you don't mind my taking off my coat, old fellow." And, for my part, I always say : " Certainly not ; you may take off anything you like," for I know how it pleases them. It is not by any means vulgarity that prompts this request ; no vulgar man would venture to make it ; but rather, I think, some sublime yearning after freedom and the golden age of humanity. Curiously enough, when this privilege is once conceded, it seems

appropriate to quaff porter from a pewter pot, and to apply the back of the hand to the lips, which is never done, in the best circles, under any other circumstances whatever. The drinking of porter from the metal is an enjoyment confined solely to males. In all my observations from the knife-board, I never but once saw one of the fair sex bury her expressive features in the sparkling foam, and that was only to please her lord and master, who regarded her all the time as lovingly as though she were Aphrodite. This occurred in a first-floor in Gray's Inn Lane, in a family of good position.

A whole volume might indeed be written on life as seen from 'the knife-board, and one that would make rather a sensation if it recorded the actual facts. But besides the objects of external interest which are being continually presented to the travelling student of humanity, there is immense attraction for him in those remarkable persons, the Driver and the Conductor of the 'bus itself, who have never yet been properly investigated.

The omnibus-driver is perhaps the only specimen

of the true philosopher now extant; the gravest, the most serious, the most sententious, and the most egotistical of created human beings. A Beadle may possess some of his attributes, perhaps, but he lacks the elevation, and especially the catholicism. My driver looks down, not upon a parish, but upon what may not improperly be termed the world at large, for eleven hours every day of his life. Nothing, or at least very little, is concealed from him, and he has only to turn his head to witness the most surprising social phenomena. This tremendous and varied experience is a little too much for him.

“I am not a conceited person,” observed a late classical professor of great eminence, in the confidence of a friendly conversation, “but I do believe that I know everything except Botany.”

Now, that is exactly the opinion of my omnibus-driver, with this added that he knows Botany also. How is it possible that he should not know it? Conceive the flower-pots which pass under his eye, upon balconies and porches; the boxes of migno-

nette, filling up half the little windows in district N.; "the coleworts, the marygoulds, the toolips, the chickweed, and those blessed creepers"—I use the very words of my driver with reference to this subject, in place of any Linnæan classification. *Don't* he know? If not, then he would like to know the man as *does* know. This omniscience has the effect of endowing my driver with that "scorn of scorn" which has been attributed to the Poet only. He has a truly withering contempt for all his fellow-creatures who are not also omnibus-drivers, and even for those, if they are in opposition, or do not belong to his own company. Only yesterday, a pastry-cook's vehicle, with Ice written very legibly on the back of it, interfered with our progression in a narrow thoroughfare. The young man who drove it looked in no degree inferior to pastry-cooks' young men in general. He was not in the least to blame for his position in front of us, which he had obtained, not by hazardous driving, but by order of seniority. Yet he fell under the crushing satire of my driver, thus—*Git out there, with your*

old ice-cart." It was a bran-new one; and he could not "git out," unless by cutting his way through a coal-waggon and a Parcels Delivery. Yet so superior was the tone of this reproof that the young man blanched beneath it; nor did he venture to return a single word, when as we passed by him, grinding his newly-painted axletree, my driver added scornfully, "*You scaly warmint.*" Without admitting the remark to be quite courteous, I confess it filled me with admiration for the speaker, "looking right on with calm eternal eyes," and unconscious of having committed the least breach of good-manners. I have known a clerk in a government office to be every whit as insolent, but then the air was not so natural. The official *endeavours* to be rude, but the omnibus-driver is rude without knowing it. Perhaps the dangers that he has perpetually to encounter make him feel more than mortal.

To play at the game whose moves are death,
It maketh a man draw too proud a breath,

must, I have often thought, have been originally

written of one of this profession, although it has been applied to soldiers; for, consider the perils which have to be guarded against between the *Royal Oak*, in Bayswater, for instance, to the *Bank* eight times *per diem*. The slippings-up of the horses and their comings-down—the drivings-over children at crossings, and—worse—the knockings-under to policemen consequent on having done it! The long, long glide down Holborn Hill, in the course of which, if a single link, or strap, or spoke gives way, all is over! The concourse of hostile vehicles, most of them going the other way, amid which, if eye and hand are not in exact unison, or if the head “goes” for a single instant, the ’bus becomes a wreck, and the cause of wrecks in fifty others! One half-look to right or left—and there are faces among the daughters of men so fair that they will attract even omnibus-drivers—and an obstruction may be produced at Tottenham Court Road which will presently paralyse Skinner Street, and check the circulation of Cornhill.

Nay, the ’bus itself is not that ark of safety

which some imagine it to be. There are some 'busses—and especially in times when London is thronged—which, although fair to see, and brilliant with paint and gilding, are rotten and unsafe; decayed vehicles temporarily furbished up to meet the emergency, fulfilling the beautiful natural law of Supply and Demand up to a certain point, when they become, *in an instant*, chips and lucifer-matches. Thus it happened to a 'bus in the Exhibition-time.

It had traces of age on the opening-day,
Just a general flavour of mild decay,
But "nothing local," as one may say,
There couldn't be that, for the patcher's art
Had made it so like in every part,
That there wasn't a chance for one to start;
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
And the panels just as strong as the floor,
And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,
And the back crossbar as strong as the fore;
And yet, as a whole, it is past a doubt,
In another hour it would be *worn out*.

Loaded with passengers inside and out, this hypocrite of a 'bus got its fore-wheel (which was "off"

immediately) into a gutter in St. James' Street, and in the attempt at extrication the catastrophe occurred.

All at once the horses stood still,
Expectant, on that St. James' Street hill ;
First a shiver, and then a thrill ;
Then something decidedly like a spill.

What do you think the driver found
When he got up and stared around ?
The poor old 'bus in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill, and ground !

You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
How the 'bus went to pieces all at once—
All at once, and nothing first,
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

This is surely a species of accident calculated to appal the strongest mind ; yet that omnibus-driver (whose name, let it be recorded, was Oliver Wendell Holmes) is not described as having exhibited a trace of emotion previous to the dissolution of his vehicle, of the critical state of which he could scarcely have been ignorant. Omnibus-drivers, then, are brave, and very scornful ; but it is fair to add, that this latter quality is much exaggerated by

the evil treatment they receive at the hands of their proprietors. They have two guineas a week, indeed, which is a larger salary than falls to the lot of curates whose university education has cost them a thousand pounds; but they are kept at work incessantly for twelve, or even fourteen hours per week-day, while on Sundays they are worked as hard as the curates. They are allowed but twenty minutes or so for their dinner, and if any unusual obstruction has detained their vehicle, even that time for refreshment is proportionally curtailed.

"I runs down to dinner, and then I runs up again," remarked one of this persecuted class, whose weight could not have been much less than twenty stone; and if ever I heard pathos, it was in his manly tones: the very image of his "running" either up or down, set forth the dire necessity for haste in the most striking colours. That antetype of the omnibus-driver, the stage-coachman, was never hurried after this fashion; but, nevertheless, he was an inferior being. His views of life were

less extended, and his knowledge was mainly confined to horse-flesh. His pride, too, was derived from a lower source—namely, the excellence of his team. Now, fortunately for the subject of my panegyric, the superiority of his spirit is not dependent upon the beauty and condition of the steeds under his control; if it were so, he would be humble indeed.

But the most interesting of all the subjects of contemplation which are presented to me upon the knife-board is the social relation which exists between the Driver and the Conductor. We hear of brother and sister, father and son, man and wife, and a good deal of that newly-discovered relative, the co-respondent; but the bond between the omnibus-driver and his conductor has escaped the notice alike of the natural historian and of the writer of fiction. No tale of the affections, so far as I know, derives its interest from the peculiar sympathy existing between these two classes; no driver retires from his box into some place of picturesque obscurity—say Littlehampton—and

passes the remainder of his days in sentimental regret for a Conductor, repeating to himself, "Bank! Bank!" or "Twopence all the way," (the cry of his lost favourite,) by the passengerless seashore. I throw the suggestion out for the sensation-novelists, who have, singularly enough, overlooked this phase of sentiment.

In life, however, I am bound to say that the mutual behaviour of these persons does not convey the idea of morbid attachment; they contradict one another too flatly for that, and pass too protracted a period without speaking. There is an eloquence in silence, I am well aware, but not in the silence which is broken by ringing a bell, or sounding a whistle, or flapping the roof of an omnibus impatiently with a leather strap. Yet these are the communications which pass between the parties in question, whenever their conversation is suspended through temporary tiff or disinclination for talk. It is never discontinued through that delicate sensitiveness which sometimes forbids the interchange of friendly speech in the presence of

strangers. There may be four persons beside myself upon one side of the knife-board, and five upon the other, without that circumstance checking in the very least the sprightly flow of the Conductor's remarks, addressed across us all, to his friend the Driver. The former is generally the chief speaker, and is content to receive the most sententious answers, or even responsive growls, from his guide, philosopher, and friend. He passes a life in all respects the reverse of that of the driver; he never sits down; he flies from step to step, or to the ground, with the agility of an anthropoid ape; he is gallant to an extraordinary degree, and often induces unconscious females bound for Islington to patronize his vehicle, though it is going to London Bridge; he is almost always a humorist of considerable ability, and is never restricted in the expression of his sentiments by circumstances of conventional restraint—such as, for instance, that the individual who is the subject of his satire is within hearing.

The Conductor is on very much the same terms with his Driver as certain ladies of rank and fashion are with their husbands. Always apprehensive of a rebuff, he does his best to make things pleasant, and keep his lord in good-humour, but yet without subservience. In case of protracted sulks in his superior, he is himself prepared for the offensive, and "Now, then, stoopid, *off-side*, didn't I tell you. Darn me, if ever I seed a fellow miss his chances like you," is a specimen of the sardonic style in which he may be driven to address the "guv'nor," if all his arts of fascination have failed to please. As, however, in the case of the fashionable couples above alluded to, the two are always unanimous in running down their common friends. Depreciatory remarks concerning "Bill" and his Bess (evidently visiting acquaintances of both parties) are freely interchanged between them; one contemptuously opines that "that 'ere boy"—the offspring, as I gather, of the above pair—"don't weigh eight pounds;" to

which the other replies: "No, nor seven neither." And "What about that trottin' pony of his?" asks the Conductor, radiant with satire. "Ah, what indeed!" grunts the Driver; "why, nothin' at all."

It may be a little vulgar, but I greatly delight in listening to suggestive conversation of this sort, and much prefer it to the sentences which drift into my hearing in elegant assemblies, without meaning, or even a base for the imagination to build upon. I picture Bill and Bess, their baby, and their pony under tax, and am perfectly satisfied with the presentment, until, all of a sudden, who should meet us but Bess herself, with the babe in question on her lap, and driving the very pony of which I have heard such depreciatory remarks. The animal, however, is not in motion, but standing opposite a very genteel public-house, and the lady has deputed the reins to a female friend who sits beside her, and is herself partaking of refreshment in the form of Hollands, administered to her by an obsequious potboy. "Lor, Mr. Miller," observes she, colouring a little as she

recognises our driver, "I was just taking a glass to keep the cold out.*—Lor, and you too, Mr. Parks, how do *you* do?"

Whereupon both driver and conductor go into an ecstasy after their very different manners: and "Ain't Bill's old woman fond of a glass of *water*?" screams Mr. Parks across me, sitting on the knife-board. "I believe you," replies Mr. Miller; "and that're baby, too!" adds he; but with reference to what circumstance I cannot tell. He is put in thorough good-humour, however, until we meet with a South Kensington 'bus far too crowded with passengers to be gratifying. He exchanges a surly turn of the wrist with his brother-driver; but the conductor of the fortunate vehicle is anxious to have his triumph recognised in a more signal manner. "Here's a blessed lot on 'em, ain't there?" exclaims he, indicating his fares with a wave of his hand, as if they were dry goods; "it's them presents down at Kensington; I likes presents, I do." No answer is re-

* The thermometer on the day in question was 65 in the shade.

turned to this self-congratulatory speech ; but Mr. Parks remarks moodily to Mr. Miller, that “that there Jack Walker is always owdacious lively when he’s full.” This would almost seem a contradiction in terms, since people in that condition are seldom or never lively ; but the observation refers to the fulness, not of Mr. John Walker, but of the omnibus which he has the honour to conduct.

And here, let me say, as one accustomed to the knife-board, that not only are Mr. Parks, Mr. Walker, and most of their class extraordinarily lively when full, but, whether full or empty, exceedingly kind and considerate to women and children, helping them carefully down the step, and even tenderly accompanying them through the perilous streams of traffic to the kerbstone of safety. Their behaviour in this respect is in the strongest contrast with that of cabmen.

As to how the omnibus-driver conducts himself socially when off his box, I have no information to offer ; but when serving on a job, and not engaged in public traffic, his nature undergoes a revolution.

On the night of the illuminations on the occasion of the royal marriage, I chanced to sit next the driver of a 'bus who was acting in a private capacity. Nothing could exceed the ease and affability of his manners. He drank the best part of half-a-dozen of sherry, and ate sandwiches in such mighty layers, that the task of satisfying him seemed as hopeless as that of supplying a Russian bear with sugar-coated Bath-buns. All on a sudden, however, he observed that he had had enough of *them*, and produced a loaf and half a cheese from his pocket, which he "worked off" (I use his very words) to the last crumb. Eventually, I regret to state, he got politely intoxicated. This did not incapacitate him from driving, but it confined his conversation to a single remark, which he repeated, I should think, about nine hundred times between Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park Corner. "All I ses is, let me only give satisfacshun." And that was all he did say. I was upwards of eight hours upon omnibus-top on that particular occasion, and I confess that I had more

than enough of it. But in a general way, I repeat that the most charming method of metropolitan travel is on the knife-board of a 'Bus.

CHAPTER XVII.

A POPULAR PREACHER.

I AM not a successful person, and I don't like a person that is so. When I am told of people who have caught the public ear or eye—an actor who draws full houses, a barrister who affects juries to tears, a poet who reaches a second edition, anybody, in short, who has done more than I have done—I feel a very natural antipathy for him, and adopt one of two courses: I deny that the thing is true; I have been to the theatre, and was the only creature in the stalls; I have been to the Old Bailey, and was convulsed with merriment at the pathos of the learned gentleman; I happened to know the publisher, and he confessed to putting “second edition” upon all after the first fifty copies.

Or else, admitting the success, I deny that it is deserved; the actor is a stick, the counsel is a pump, the poet is a fool. I find this practice, as a general rule, to be soothing to myself, as well as pleasing to my friends; the majority of whom also have been unfortunate in life, having merits that have never been appreciated, genius that has been ignored, and yearnings that have never come to anything.

Picture, then, our indignant sentiments when we heard of a certain reverend gentleman—one Boanerges—getting fifteen thousand people to listen to him in the open air. This, of course, was a frightful exaggeration; but then if there were only ten thousand? or even five thousand? Some of us were clergymen ourselves, and were, reasonably enough, excessively outraged. Well, we did what we could; we heard it from the best authority that there were barely five hundred in his chapel, and that each of those received a four-penny-piece for going there; that after the first day's preaching the novelty of the thing went off,

and so did the congregation ; that poor Boanerges was a seventh-day wonder which only lasted a week. The report then spreading that a gigantic place of worship, such as had not been heard of since Solomon's Temple, had been actually projected for the express purpose of accommodating Boanerges's hearers, followed by the certain news that one of the finest music-halls in London had been found insufficient for his audience in the meanwhile, and that the very largest of all had been engaged instead—then, I say, we altered our tactics. Boanerges was (then) a Mormon, a Shaker, a Jumper, a Latter-day Saint. He belonged to the Agapemone, denied the rotundity of the earth, was in favour of a plurality of wives, habitually preached standing upon one leg, emphasising with the other upon the reading-cushion, and held dramatic dialogues with Adam, with Moses, and with Nebuchadnezzar. We were confirmed in this line of proceeding by the religious newspapers, who, upon the occasion of a frightful accident occurring in his crowded congregation,

asserted roundly that it served them, the sufferers, right. "No man," said one of them, "is justified in collecting large assemblies who has not the power of controlling them"—upon an alarm of fire, for instance ; after which it went on to describe what its Archdeacon Stratecote would have done in a similar emergency. Anti-Boanerges tracts also were published, with strange interrogatory titles—"Who is Boanerges?" "Why is Boanerges popular?" "Who is the Chief Heretic of To-day?" Not, of course, that we, or the newspapers, or the tracts cared sixpence what Boanerges was or was not, but on account of the fifteen thousand persons, more or less, who still kept going to hear him. People one meets at dinner-parties began to go ; some of whom—Wilkins, for instance, a young man without a proper sense of respect for his superiors—thought fit to oppose my sentiments.

"Any man," I had observed, "who degrades himself to act the buffoon, will get thousands to come and see him do it."

"There are more buffoons in the world than spectators," retorted Wilkins.

"Sir," said I, in a manner which is considered to be like that of the great lexicographer's, "there are not. I maintain that if a man choose to play the actor in his pulpit upon the Sabbath-day, he will fill his house."

"Nay; but we know not a few of those also," persisted Wilkins, "who have still several pews to let. I don't want to exalt my man unduly, but he shall not be sat upon."

"Sir," said I, "did not this person address a man from his pulpit who happened to come into his chapel out of the rain, and stigmatise him as 'an umbrella Christian?' Did he not on one occasion imitate a badger? Did he not, on another, run down his pulpit stairs, to illustrate the swiftness of a fall from grace; and toil up the same slowly, to picture the difficulty of repentance? Did he not call the established clergy 'dumb dogs?' Did he not?"

"Perhaps he did, and perhaps he did not," said

Wilkins; "I have heard you say he did, often enough: now, do you come with me next Sunday to hear him and judge for yourself."

I agreed to go. Horshair, who has been thirty years at the bar without stooping to any transaction with an attorney, and Humbleby, one of the most respectable of modern divines, offered to accompany us on the ensuing evening. We left all the arrangements to Wilkins. He said we must dine at four o'clock, in order to be at the music-hall before the service commenced. This was very disagreeable to people of our years and position, and particularly as we could get nothing at the club till after six. We arranged, then, to meet at "the Wellington" at fifty-nine minutes past three; and Humbleby and I were there, punctual to the minute. There was some printed statements upon one side of the door, setting forth that upon Sundays no table could be served till after five o'clock; we rang the bell, and found that even this hope was illusory, and that the earliest time of hope was half-past five.

Horshair and Wilkins kept us waiting in the east wind for near a quarter of an hour, during which my friend continuously observed that it served us both right, and that it was nothing more than he had expected. We then adjourned to a neighbouring chop-house, strongly recommended by our young companion, and partook of the very worst dinner that I have had since I was a school-boy: much as wine was to be desired on such an occasion, and particularly for the stale fish, there was no wine to be got until six o'clock. During this melancholy entertainment, Wilkins observed that he hoped we were all right about Boanerges, for he was advertised to preach at so many different places that one could never be quite sure. Humbleby was speechless with indignation; but Horshair and I gave the young man so much of our minds as to induce him to confess he was only joking. Immediately after cheese, we drove away in two hansoms to the music-hall; an hour's indigestion, turnpike-paying, and suffocation (for Wilkins *would* smoke) ensued before we reached

our bourne, which seemed to be a long blank wall in a perfectly empty street. An official person with his back against it informed us that Boanerges only preached there in the mornings; and that in the evenings he preached at his own chapel a mile or two off, in Southwark. Humbleby, who had quarrelled with Horshair coming along, immediately began to walk back again without any remark, and, as we afterwards discovered, had the misfortune to be garroted near to the South-Western Railway Station.

We three drove on to the chapel, the street in front of which was filled with masses of people. Horshair, not knowing that Humbleby had previously paid the cabman, discharged the entire account over again, from which circumstance much dispute arose between the two friends; but there was no time to lose in inquiries, if we were to hear Boanerges that evening. Though we formed ourselves into a solid square of three, we had much ado to keep our position in the crowd, and could not advance one step. The great iron gates in front

of the chapel were closed ; but two strong currents of people were flowing in, by ticket, at the side-doors ; “ a thoroughly Calvinistic notion,” as Hors-hair observed, whose forte, when disgusted, is sarcasm. Presently, the police let three great waves of outside folk through the main entrance, and then the inexorable iron closed for good : we were in the fourth wave next the bars. A deacon—one of those of whom Boanerges is reported to have said : “ Resist the devil, and he will fly from you ; but resist a deacon, and he will fly *at* you ”—here addressed us, and implored us to go away. “ Mr. Boanerges himself has said that his chapel holds but twelve hundred to hear, and two thousand to suffocate ; the two thousand are now in. Three streets off, there is good doctrine and a most respectable minister—Ebenezer Chapel, first turn on the left hand.” This announcement was greeted by a general groan, the sentiment of which was “ Boanerges aut nullus ;” and not till the opening hymn—it sounded like a song of triumph—was raised by the fortunate inmates of the wished-for

place, did we in the street begin to melt away in twos and threes. In those unknown, ill-paved, unlighted, cableless regions, I claim credit for myself and Horshair that we did not do for Wilkins, who appeased us, however, in some slight measure by standing dinner—for we had had no dinner, in any high sense of the term—at the club.

On the ensuing Sunday, Wilkins called upon me at breakfast-time with two tickets: "Admission for Lord's-day mornings" to the temple of Boanerges. I glared at him for a moment or two, and then consented to go. It was a beautifully clear day; the gardens in which the music-hall was built were crisp with frost, and their ornamental waters sparkled in the sun; the scene was more like one in Paris than in London; and the vast throngs of ticket-holders among the statues and the arbours, and in front of the great model of the Russian stronghold, seemed pleasure-takers rather than church-goers. The music-hall itself, with its hundred windows and long gilded galleries, with its printed announcements of "Cloak-rooms,"

“Refreshment-rooms,” “This way to the stalls,” and so on, which were suffered to remain in all their native profanity, contrasted strangely with the usual habitations of religion amongst us; two private boxes on either side the orchestra alone reminding one, by a sort of impious parody, of the grand old British pew. Upon the orchestra seats and fronting the vast assemblage, Boanerges’ own particular flock were accommodated; and where the conductor’s box was wont to be, was reared an enormous pen, by way of pulpit. How the folk kept flocking in!—for the most part well-dressed—there were scarcely any poor among them—and quite as many males as females; the majority, like ourselves, with curious, half-smiling faces; but a large minority, too, with very demure ones, in whose, chiefly feminine, hands were a Bible and a ticket neatly wrapped up in a pocket-handkerchief. These tickets, by-the-by, cost but twelve stamps for a course of four sermons, and, it is fair to state, go a very little way towards paying the hire of so vast a place, which is expected to be defrayed by

the voluntary contributions of the congregation at the doors. The body of the hall, and also the best seats in the galleries, were filled before the gates were opened to the general public, and the unticketed religious world rolled in upon us like a flood. In ten minutes, when the gates were closed again, there was not an empty seat to be seen. The whisper that threaded this great crowd dropped in an instant, and every man's head was bared, as if by magic, for we had come together, some of us, at least, to worship, and lo! there was the Preacher.

A middle-sized, unhandsome person, not above twenty-five years old at most, heavy-featured, rather flat-faced, straight-haired—but with what a voice! Without effort, without perceptible lift even, it filled that mighty temple with a volume of sound. A short opening prayer, somewhat remarkable for metaphor, was followed by a hymn, which a man with a tuning-fork gave out from the orchestra seats, and the select few thereon began to sing; it was one not well-known to us, or in

which most of the congregation could join, being selected from some dissenting psalm-book ; but, even as it was, the aggregate of voices made up a most impressive harmony. The preacher subsequently referred to this when speaking of "the voice of many waters, and the voice of a great thunder, and the voice of harpers harping with their harps," as also to his own sensations at different times when under such influences ; and indeed he seemed to well understand what modern divines have mostly yet to learn, that an example from their own experience, or drawn from the present circumstances of their audience, is worth a thousand metaphors from earth, and sea, and sky. Boanerges never missed an illustration because of its homeliness, and, leaving abstract virtues and vices to abstract men and women, addressed himself to folks of flesh and blood. "When I say *Mammon*, I don't mean idle dukes or greedy merchant-princes ; my small adulterating shopkeeper, I mean *you*." And again, upon the importance of seeming trifles : "There is many

a man who will lose a thousand pounds without a murmur, and yet blaspheme about a shirt-button." In the prayer before the sermon, he touched upon the subjects at present interesting the national mind, expressing in a brief, rough manner, too, the healthy popular opinion upon most things. For the country, for the Queen, he prayed; for the confounding of despots, for the extinction of slavery, and for peace; and for the high court of parliament, "that it may do this coming session something, and not nothing, and that it may be vouchsafed, if it be but a little, wisdom." Before this prayer, he gave a short exposition of the hundred and third psalm, more remarkable for eloquence than learning, in which he rejected, somewhat violently, the eagle's renewal of its youth as a wicked fable, and limited the parallel to the ordinary process of moulting; then followed more singing, and then the sermon, which was taken from the Revelations. It is not of course my purpose to repeat it in this *Journal*, or in any way to deprive the *Penny Pulpit* of its lawful

prey ; my only intention has been, and is, to give a brief impartial account of the public preaching of a very remarkable man. Now that I have been to hear him, and since scarcely any of my acquaintance have had the same opportunity, I feel that there is something to be said for Boanerges as well as against him. He seems to me to be thoroughly in earnest, to have great command of language, and to know his way to the feelings of his congregation ; at all events, he knows their weaknesses, and attacks them boldly, face to face, without any masked batteries whatever ; while that great voice of his is rolling over their heads, there is not a sound to interrupt or weaken it ; and when he pauses to refresh himself at his glass of water, a tempest of coughing and nose-blowing proclaims at once the willing patience and real attention of his hearers. I know many wittier men than Boanerges, and I know one or two as eloquent, but I know none who could have preached such passages as this man did without a trace of flippant profanity, and with all appear-

ance of religious earnestness: "The name that was written upon the foreheads of the saints—what was it? B for Baptist, do you imagine, my friend Bigot yonder? W for Wesleyan? C for Calvinist? E, perhaps, for the Establishment? *It does not say so here.* If you asked of the angel who keeps the gates of paradise whether there are any Baptists withinside, he'd shake his head. Any Calvinists?—he would not so much as look at you. Any of the Establishment?—he'd answer: "*Nothing of the sort.*" They would all be there indeed, perhaps, my friends, but not in miserable sects and parties: they would be all Christians—saints." There were many such—I was almost going to write "hits"—striking illustrations during this sermon, the whole of which was upon that "very disagreeable but true doctrine, my friends—*although indeed I am none of your strait-gate and narrow-way people—Election.*"

Finally, if I had to answer that before-mentioned tract called "Why is Boanerges Popular?" I should answer, that he is so mainly because he

combines real eloquence with what Luther possessed, and Latimer possessed, and which no modern preacher, except Boanerges, perhaps *does* possess—earnest religious *humour*.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN EQUESTRIAN ENTERTAINMENT.

IT was late one afternoon in December last that I found myself on the roof of a Bayswater 'bus, but travelling eastward. It is well known to my readers that I am not at all above taking the air in that manner, and I particularly like it just before dinner. I do not mean before a banquet whereat evening-dress is indispensable, but previous to that more comfortable meal which awaits one at a club. The mind is then prevented from growing impatient by observations of men and things; the liver soon, perhaps, to be tried by some too gorgeous viand, is vastly benefited by the violent oscillation, and the appetite is titillated to the proper pitch. Moreover, the most intelligent class

of people in town, and those who can be most depended upon as conversationalists, are unquestionably to be found upon the driving-box and monkey-board of an omnibus. I allude, of course, to the driver and conductor. The society of the former of these is so much sought after that it is hard to obtain a seat beside him; but colloquial access to the conductor is, through his position, less difficult. Thus, in this particular case, the four seats of "the omnibus-box" were engaged by a rapt audience, and I had to content myself with the conversation of the cad, which, although brilliant as usual, was subject to interruption from his having to dash away at times, and make up the minds of indecisive females by dragging them into his vehicle.

However, as we neared the Edgware Road, even this species of chance passenger got very rare, for who wants to go into the City after six o'clock? As for the knife-board, I was all alone there, like a bachelor in the Bed of Ware; and when I heard the door slammed at Praed Street, I thought we

had lost all our insides. This, however, was far from being the case.

"I *say*," cried the conductor, taking a cotton handkerchief out of his hat, and wiping his forehead—"here's a go, sir, if there ever was one!"

"What's the matter?" inquired I, at the same time entreating that he would hold on to the strap, and let his forehead alone till he got down.

"I can't help it," returned he—"I never was so taken aback in my life. Did you see them 'ere two fellurs who just got out?"

"I saw the top of their hats," said I; "and they were very bad ones."

"And so they ought to be," observed my friend with indignation. "Nothing but the habjectest poverty can excuse what they have been and done."

"Why, what *have* they done?" inquired I.

"Well, they've been and *got in again*," returned the conductor. "We're tuppence to Praed Street, and thripence from Praed Street to the City; and 'beyond those distances,' says our table of fares

inside, we're sixpence. Now, darned if these gents—no, gents wouldn't behave so shabby—darned if these scheming willins haven't got out and paid their tuppences, and now got in again, in order to pay their thripences, by which means they will save a penny apiece by the transaction. Now, don't that beat Mazeppa all to nothing?"

"It is very ingenious," said I, "and shows great frugality of mind; but I am not sufficiently acquainted with the details respecting Mazeppa to offer an opinion."

"What, have you not heard about Mazeppa, the Tartarean steed as is hacting at —— I say, Bill!"

Here my friend endeavoured to draw the driver's attention to the humorous fact of any person (such as myself) not being aware of all the circumstances connected with the animal in question; but, fortunately, the noise of the traffic drowned his cries.

"It is unnecessary, my good friend," observed I, "that *two* people should tell me this story; your testimony will be quite sufficient. Pray, begin at

the beginning; I know nothing about it; and, indeed, I was not even aware that Mazeppa was the name of a horse at all."

"No more it t'aint, bless ye; it's a *mare*. She's a hacting now at Hashley's, and a drawing her thousands; and yet, would you believe it, she used to be a 'bus oss, and never drawed more than her eighteen at a time, if so many. Talk about hingenuity! Why, how do you think they starts 'the Desert-born'—that's what they calls it—on her Wild Career?"

"They crack a whip at the wing, I suppose," said I, remembering how M. Fechter's mare in the *King's Butterfly* is incited to action.

"Nothin' of the kind, sir," observed the conductor triumphantly; "they bangs a door, and calls out 'Right,' just as we do, and then the Desert-born moves on accordingly. *Moreover*" (the excitement of the narrator here rose to such a pitch that he shook his head in the negative at two old ladies frantically telegraphing him to stop and take them in)—"*Moreover*, there's a vultur, or a heagle,

or somethink of that in the piece, which descends upon this 'ere Mazeppa; and how do you think they makes her stop? Why, by hollering out 'Peckham! Peckham!' which is the place she used to run to when in harness. Oh, ain't it a pretty game!"

Here the conductor once more had resort to his hat for his pocket-handkerchief, and wiped his eyes with amazing vigour.

"But when is this to be seen, my good friend?" inquired I, as I descended at the Circus, in order to walk quietly down Regent Street, and so to the *Megatherium* club-house.

"Why, it's to be seen every night—to-night, if you like. Now do you go, sir."

And after dinner, during which I retailed the above incident amid marked applause, I *did* go accordingly, and more than one guest-fellow went with me.

Everybody knows that Astley's is a very different place from what it used to be in the days of Widdicomb and saw-dust; indeed, it is now per-

haps the most comfortable theatre in all London. But during the performance of *Mazeppa* there was one charming circumstance which vividly brought back the old times to my mind, and seemed almost to renew my youth : I allude to that overpowering odour of—I know not what—which hangs like an atmosphere about all equestrian entertainments, and *them* only, with the single exception of Wild-beast Shows. It can't be got in a mere stable. It is a subtle perfume, made up of a combination of various essences, in which nothing preponderates, although saw-dust, and gas, and orange-peel have all their proper places in it, and harmonise the whole.

My intelligent informant, to whom I was indebted for this theatrical experience, was mistaken, I perceived, in one particular. It was not the *horse* who played *Mazeppa*, but a Jewish maiden, called in the bills Miss Menken, “whose Graceful and Classical Acting, combined with Histrionic Power, Genius, and Amazonian Courage, threw a new light upon Lord Byron's *Chef-d'œuvre*.” This

was true, and especially the last part of it. *Next* to the extraordinary peculiarity of a horse, as suggested, acting Mazeppa, I should think may be placed the fact of a female sustaining that part. It is generally, it seems, played by a dummy; for, said the bill, "Notice: in this drama, Miss Adah Isaacs Menken, as Mazeppa, ascends the fearful precipices on Horseback, and fights her Combats, *which has hitherto been done by Deputy.*" The literature of our drama is said to be in the hands of the French; but let us be thankful that that of our playbills is still English. There were expressions in that one at Astley's which never could have entered into the mind of a foreigner, and with which no study of the British classics could have supplied him. "The Terrific Rakes and Wild Mountain Paths," it said, "had been erected by Mr. Nash and fifty assistants." Now, "the Terrific Rakes by Mr. Nash and fifty assistants," would have been intelligible. From conversation held immediately about us (for it being an equestrian entertainment, we thought it only right to be in

“the stalls”), we gathered that the fitting costume for a Tartar prince of the seventeenth century, when bound to an untamed steed, had been a subject of great contention with the London press. Since the original text of Lord Byron could scarcely be followed with propriety, the dramatic critics were at feud. The attire of the present Mazeppa had been even stigmatised as insufficient; but really, as others urged, in these days of burlesque and ballet, it was hard to know where to draw the line—that is, the clothes-line. Once permit persons on the stage to dress otherwise than the spectators, and you open the door to anything—and almost nothing. It is like the argument of what is fair and civilized in War, which generally resolves itself, at last, into the not very bigoted restriction, that one mustn’t poison the enemy’s wells. This question of apparel is far too delicate and difficult a one for the present writer to settle; and if Mazeppa upon the Desert-born did appear to me as though he had recently escaped from a house on fire, and had not risked his life a second time by

going back for superfluous garments, perhaps it was only because I really have no idea how a prince of Tartary *ought* to have been dressed under such very exceptional circumstances.

But of the steed itself (whose name did not transpire), let me say a few words of praise. It never could have been an omnibus horse; of that I am positively certain. It would not have been permitted by the police, since its appearance would have created obstruction in the highways—mobs. It was of the most wonderful colour imaginable; like a strawberry-cream ice when it begins to melt. If it ever was a jet-black (as represented in the posters), the disease which induced its present hue must have been a very remarkable one. If it ever reared, or sprang across unfathomable gulfs (as depicted in the playbills), this must have taken place during the earlier representations of the piece, and I was unfortunate in having delayed my visit. Or perhaps the creature expends its tremendous powers in the rehearsals. It was an animal, nevertheless, of the greatest versatility of

genius. The affability with which it—or another wild steed very like it—took part in a medieval tournament, wherein, by-the-by, the combatants seized one another by the collar like policemen, and used their lances as single-sticks, was above all praise; its behaviour when the vulture was hovering, was indomitable in the highest degree, and even leisurely; while the manner in which it pretended to be dead, was—like life itself.* In a word, I was very much gratified with the Desert-born.

As for Mazeppa, I did not know whom I was looking at, till an old gentleman, apparently of the Jewish persuasion, was so good as to hand me over a little pamphlet, in a yellow cover, for which he refused to accept any remuneration whatever. This naturally excited my astonishment; yet not so much so as the contents of the work in question. This

* The joke was irresistible; but I will not knowingly wound the feelings of any fellow-creature, though quadruped, and of a strawberry-cream; the horse was a most intelligent horse, and looked as dead (when required so to do), as a pudding-stone.

professed to be "a brief biography of Adah Isaacs Menken;" and although brief, it was very startling. It began by stating that this lady was of the Hebrew faith, "which she has always loved, and been a warm defender of;" that while yet a child, she mastered the French, Latin, and Hebrew languages, and at twelve years old translated Homer's *Iliad* from the original tongue. At fourteen she was *première danseuse* at the French Opera House in New Orleans; and upon the occasion of her farewell benefit, presents of diamonds and gold were bestowed upon her, beyond the value of 2,000 dollars—one bracelet alone costing 700." Migrating to Cuba, she was adopted by a wealthy Spanish family. Here she had horses, carriages, diamonds, &c., at her command in profusion; but in consequence of a lawsuit, "she became discontented, and gathering up horses, dogs, &c., went to Texas, and thence to Mexico," where she was again *première danseuse*. After this season of triumph, she seems to have returned to Texas, and "out hunting one day with her grooms and

dogs, a party of Indians took her captive." A prisoner in their hands for more than three weeks, she was rescued, after a sanguinary engagement, by a company of "Texan Rangers," who took her to Austen, where the army was then stationed, commanded by General Harvey. Here she remained at head-quarters, "breakfasting with the family," assisting the General in translating Spanish documents into French and English, "reviewing troops, and commanding the regiment with the dignity and precision of an old soldier."

Tired of a military life, she returned to New Orleans, and gave herself up to literature and the study of German; also to music and painting. Then, too, she published a volume of poetry called *Memories*—which ought, we should think, to be interesting, if the contents are indicated by the title—but yet she had not become so etherealised as to neglect her own affairs. She again visited Texas, "to look after a large tract of land that belonged to her." She established a newspaper of her own at Liberty, and became teacher of Latin

and French in a young-ladies' academy in that city. Then she took to the stage for the first time, as an actress, as Bianca in the tragedy of *Fazio*, at New Orleans, in 1858. Here, too, she was "crowned with flowers, and presented with a set of diamonds [*toujours* diamonds] and a golden goblet." Although thus successful, she left the stage and studied sculpture, "working in the studio of T. D. Jones at Columbus;" then went to Cincinnati, and became principal contributor to the *Israelite*, the leading Jewish paper in America. "Her reply to the *Churchman*, in defence of Baron Rothschild's Admission to Parliament, was copied widely in England, translated into French and German journals, and for which [*sic*] she received an autograph letter of praise and thanks from Baron Rothschild, calling her *the inspired Deborah of her race*."

We have nearly done now.

"The circumstances of her family compelled her to return to the stage. She played several engagements West; and while at Dayton, in the state of

Ohio, she was elected, by complimentary vote, captain of the Dayton Light Guard, and presented with a handsome sword and epaulettes."

I have quoted rather largely from the pamphlet, because it is so very curious; the fact, too, of its being printed, quite apart from the authenticity of its contents, is not without significance. Was it usual, in the days of our boyhood at Astley's or any other theatre, to be supplied with a biography of the particular star which happened to be then shining? Others, I hear, have seen *Mazeppa* without being furnished with this interesting memoir, but that proves nothing, any more than the circumstance of some persons *not* having seen an individual commit murder, acquits him of that crime. *I*, at all events, have got the Biography, and value it immensely. If I ever went to see *Mazeppa* again, which, however, I do not at present contemplate, I should regard with a new interest "the inspired Deborah of her race," who is also the "captain of the Dayton Light Guard." Strange and melodramatic as is the play in which I beheld her, its

incidents are feeble compared with those which I read make up the sum of her life.

Of course, I am told that this said biography is only a bright bubble meant for "puffing," or, as Sir Watts Watt of the *Megatherium* characterises it, "all lies." But even so, it is a new and striking feature in the British drama. It is by no means new, however, I am given to understand, in the New World. The American Stars, in their courses, are somewhat eccentric; and the Lights and Shadows of London Theatrical Life are not always to be woven, it seems, according to the old patterns.

CHAPTER XIX.

BEHIND THE SCENES.

EVERY child who hears a watch tick, and marks the golden hands revolve so deftly over the smooth face, desires to see the inside of it, and will not be persuaded by his elders that wheels and mainspring are disappointing spectacles. Similarly every young fellow who goes to the Play, and beholds from stall or box the Fairy wonders of the Stage, is desirous of going Behind the Scenes. It is not idle curiosity alone which, as in the child's case, prompts this yearning. He knows that the opening of the stage-door is not so easily compassed as that beside the box-office; there are difficulties in the way which whet his ambition. He understands, too, that the aristo-

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crazy (male) of his native land pass their evenings in the precincts in question ; and he dearly loves to be where *they* are. Finally, the idea that there is a *souppçon* of impropriety about the proceeding—a touch of “fastness” and town-life—completes the catalogue of incitements. It will be easily believed that this third reason, at all events, had nothing to do with the visit of this Home Correspondent—who is Nothing if he is not Correct—behind the scenes of the Great British Theatre. *That* element, it will be acknowledged at once, was as foreign to his enterprise as to the undertaking of Christopher Columbus, or to the rediscovery of Nineveh. Nor is it necessary to disclose by what means the H. C., whose initials are an open Sesame everywhere from the Palace to the Refuge for the Destitute, obtained admission to that mysterious locality of “wings,” and “traps,” and “flats,” fraught with such danger to the Impressionable.

The stage-door of the G. B. T. (like the alphabet, through which we pass to the delights

of literature) does not impress one favourably in itself, nor at all foreshadow those realms of splendour and enchantment to which it gives access. It is situated in an ill-lighted back-lane, always filled by cabs, which, having once deposited their dramatic fares, are forbidden (as I conclude) by the narrowness of the way from all return, and remain there until some favourable opportunity (such as the burning of the Theatre, which takes place at pretty regular intervals) shall occur, and once more restore them to their legitimate Rank. The vestibule reminds one—or rather would have reminded any one who was acquainted with such localities—of that apartment, half-cell, half-office, in which the inspector at a police station is accustomed to take the night-charges ; while a winding narrow stair, with steps of stone and railings of iron, precisely such as ornament Her Majesty's prisons—except that it is far from clean—leads down to the Bowers of Bliss and Dells of Dream-land.

What strikes one most, upon first setting foot

on these mysterious boards, is the enormous space they occupy. There seems to be a theatre—except that it has no dress-circle nor gallery, and terminates not in ceiling but in chaos—*behind* the scenes, fully as large as that which we know to be *before* them. Vast curtains, canvasses, obstacles with whose very nature we are unacquainted, but which look like advertising hoardings, interpose at various distances between ourselves and the stage, on which the Christmas pantomime is being enacted, and yet there appears to be room enough to drill a Volunteer brigade in. A solitude like that of Sahara, and about equally dusty, spreads around us, illumined by flaring gas-jets in wire cages, and overshadowed in one corner by an artificial firmament not in use, out of which the moon has dropped, and the stars hang in a state of doubt, as well they may, as to what course should be taken by their courses in a case so altogether unexampled. The great globe itself is also there, but drunk and incapable, its fair proportions dented like a squeezed orange, and the

Pacific Ocean clean carried away (as might have been expected) by the fall of the moon.

There are seasons of spectacle when the stage of the G. B. T. is used to its very limit (to represent excessive Distance or vast Numbers), but upon the present occasion, as I have said, there is a great deal of space unoccupied save by theatrical lumber, and untrodden by the human form divine. But not so by the fairies, who are diviner still. See, here comes one, in a charming costume, although there is so little of it, all gauze and glitter, with a gleaming crescent on her brow, to shew that she is not the Venus which we took her for, and a silver something in her hand of eccentric shape, which we know to be a bow, because at her back there clangs a quiver; like a sunbeam, threading its way through dust and gloom, how gracefully she trips among the rubbish, here coasting by a gigantic paint-pot, there tacking to avoid an oil-jar, but always smiling like the Morn she never sees. The Home Correspondent trembles in all his limbs, grasps at his introducer (who regards his weakness

with contemptuous pity), and acknowledges in every lineament the fealty which he pays to passing beauty. There is a pasteboard fountain in her way, suggestive, by-the-by, of anything but water, and I hasten forward to remove it; it yields to my unnecessary force, as lightly as though I had taken a roll of bonnet-ribbon for an iron garden-roller, and I almost measure my length at the fairy's feet. "Pray mind my wings, sir," says she, with a pettishness which, in one's wife perhaps, one would call ill-humour, but which appears in this sylph to be the prettiest form remonstrance ever took; and on she trips, as though a human heart like mine could recover from her relentless tread as easily as a crushed daisy.

"How are you, Kitty?" observes my friend, and this ethereal being responds: "How are you?" at the same time giving him an enchanting hand, which he does *not* raise reverently to his lips, but shakes with unaffected heartiness, as though it belonged to some club-friend of his newly turned up from the country. "A thorough good girl is

Kitty," remarks he in explanation, as she vanishes round a corner, "who supports her sister, who has a bad spine, and I am afraid stints herself to procure little luxuries for that invalid."

So, you see, she was an angel instead of a fairy, after all.

To suppose, indeed, that "behind the scenes" is a place devoted to flirtation, or that every Coryphée is a flower for the human butterfly to amuse himself with, is to commit something worse than a mistake: it is to do a wrong. The thoroughly business air with which she goes about her duties (which are by no means light because they are graceful) is worthy of Threadneedle Street or (let us say) of Angel Court. There is this marked difference, however, in favour of the lady; becoming as are her artificial adornments, there is an unaffected good-humour about her which is more winning (to honest folks) than they. Her manners are totally free from *mauvaise honte*, but they are by no means "bold." She is unaware of there being any peculiarity in her costume, for indeed she is

attired like the vast majority of her sex in that strange sphere. Her mamma is there, very likely, in a poke-bonnet and ordinary wraps of a warm texture, and I protest that she looks the more grotesque and unreal of the two; so familiar has the scene already grown; so easily do we conform ourselves to that world of tinsel and gilding, peopled by Fays and Sprites—that atmosphere of heat and intense light, with sullen waves of sound (which is Applause) breaking in at times from the “house” before the curtain.

Fay meets Fay with a cordiality (although they have doubtless their jealousies) which is very rare among ladies of fashion: “Jemima, darling, just set my quiver right, will you?” or “Kitty, dear, let me straighten your wings.” Their behaviour, too, with those young gentlemen who are evidently *habitués* of the place, is artless and sister-like. There was certainly less flirtation than is seen, after a *déjeuner à la fourchette*, on the lawn of many a respectable villa-residence on the banks of Thames; and perhaps less misunderstanding of mutual position.

I am bound to say that there was one exception to this good-conduct upon the part of a certain visitor, who, in the graphic and well-chosen words of an indignant goddess about to ascend to the empyrean upon a cloud, was both "old enough and ugly enough to know better." This ancient gentleman—or nobleman for all that I know—went about with his faded airs and smileless face, whispering soft nothings to very little purpose, and, as it appeared to us, got considerably snubbed ; but after a little, to our great content, he took himself off, instead of being taken, as he ought to have been, down the nearest trap, by Demons, and condemned there to wind windlasses of endless chains until the theatrical season terminated. There were depths below that would have afforded every accommodation that he deserved ; gloomy abysms, which we presently explored, with a vague impression of dust, and darkness, and the lifting of heavy weights, such as might have been produced by visiting Great Tower Street in July during an eclipse. Then again we mounted to

the "flies," where, in dusty gloom, the carpenters sat by the vast cylinders of rope, with their fingers on the iron handles, waiting for the signal from below ; also into the Painting Room, a desolate chamber, whose immense extent might have taught perspective to the artist of the willow-pattern plate ; nay, we were even shown the door—only the door—that opened on the sanctum which "young persons" in the receipt of a guinea a week as ballet-dancers entered shawled and cloaked, and came forth from glorious with gauze and spangles as Daughters of the Sun. But wherever we went, no matter what the gloom, through cracks and clefts, the glare and glitter of the stage would force its way ; and no matter what the distance from "the house," those sullen waves of sound, that were Applause, would yet be heard.

Then once again back to our place at the Wing, for the juveniles, attendant sprites of the stage princess, are about to "go on," and that is a sight not to be missed. Not one of those little folks before the curtain, the clapping of whose tiny

hands, and whose shrill laughter gladden all ears, is merrier than these child-actors. The officials who are appointed for that purpose (and a kinder set of teachers I never saw) have enough to do to restrain their eager pupils, as they crowd around to receive their various "properties" to take with them on the stage. How they shake their little wings with glee, and perk and chatter like a flock of linnets, as the kind old lady gives them each what he or she should have; and how proud and happy seem the two or three pale women in humble dress, who have come to see how their little darlings look in all their bravery. A considerable number of these, however, are not to be seen at all, being the inmates of peripatetic game-pies; trussed turkeys, and a score of other gigantic delicacies which are to form an enchanted banquet on the stage; and it was pretty to hear the bystanders telling the Punchbowl to walk straight, and to see them guiding the slender Bottles of Champagne in the way that they should go. This mixture of domesticity with the unreal splendours of the place,

is to be met with everywhere. The clown, who is not yet dressed for the harlequinade, and, indeed, who looks uncommonly like a Methodist parson, is asking some question of his wife, who is not herself of the theatrical calling, with respect to their youngest child, who, I gather from the conversation, has been sufficiently unwell to require a gray powder; while the young princesses, who apparently inhabit the same palace together, are debating as to whether the clerk of the kitchen (who may be a maid-of-all-work or their own mother) will remember to have cooked their potatoes for supper with their jackets on, as was particularly enjoined.

Looking from the wing at the house itself, the spectators seem to be a totally different set of persons from ourselves, who are by this time thoroughly identified with the folks on our own side of the curtain. It is the former who are the puppets, not the latter; or, rather, they are so unindividualised and massed together, and at the same time so diminished by distance, that they appear

to be more a counterfeit presentment of our fellow-creatures than real people. But something is now occurring to engage our wrapt attention, as it engages that of all those who have not their own work to do upon the stage just at present : a long "trap" in the floor is opened, and reveals a deep dark chasm, down which a poor carpenter fell, as we were told, a few nights before, and was carried out dead to pantomimic music ; up this comes slowly an enormous iron frame, gaudily painted to represent foliage, and which is to bear for fruit the most beautiful of the "rose garden of girls" about us. This is presently to form the background of the magnificent Transformation Scene, at which the dropping fire of applause will culminate into a *feu de joie* from all parts of the house. Again and again, the slow progress of the huge machine is checked, that this or that lovely creature shall be, Andromeda-like, securely bound to it, and always in the most graceful position to please that exigent Monster, the Public, for whom she is designed. We are close by, and watch them

under the full glare of a hundred gas-jets, and certainly, for form and comeliness, they have no cause to dread the jealous scrutiny of the most powerful opera-glass; but to see them as they laugh and talk good-humouredly among themselves during the initiatory process, is a pleasanter sight than the stereotyped smile and artificial languor which will steal over them in a few minutes. It is upon this scene, that in these days of spectacle, the success of a pantomime mainly depends; and among sylphs and fairies, to possess beauty and shapeliness is to be in a position to demand a considerable salary. It is entirely from this practical point of view that the whole affair is regarded from "behind the scenes," and if any remark of a depreciatory character is overheard, it has reference to that only.

"*I call it disgusting!*" observes a shrill female voice in my neighbourhood, so shrill that it cannot but reach the ears of the lovely being for whom it is intended, reclining upon a golden branch about twenty feet above us, in a costume unquestionably

scanty. "I should be ashamed to get *my* money that way."

That was the first and the last observation that I heard in the G. B. T., which was calculated to produce shame, and therefore pain; the remark was as much out of place and taste as though in an exhibition of statuary somebody should begin to talk of tailors; but not by the twitching of a muscle did the lady aloft betray that she was aware of the presence of the lady below. The latter stood in no danger of such a temptation as that which she seemed so self-persuaded of being able to resist; she had seen her thirty summers, and to judge by her worn pinched face, poor thing, at least the corresponding number of winters; her garments, though gauzy, were limp and soiled; her white satin shoes were dingy; her wings were battered; her silver wand had very little of the precious metal left upon it. She was that most obvious example of the text *Vanitas vanitatum*, an Old Ballet-girl! Never more would manager demand her services at her own price, by virtue

of that haggard face, that shrunken form. Long after the beautiful being at whom she sneered—who, by-the-bye, it is but fair to say, I was afterwards informed, was one of the best and honestest girls in the theatre, the chief part of whose salary found its way to other pockets than her own—long after the coryphées of the Transformation Scene had gone home, this poor faded creature, and a hundred others like her (a painful sight, indeed, by contrast with their more prosperous and youthful sisterhood), had to wait until the conclusion of the piece, when they “came on” amid the red-fire and the blue (for what complexions, alas! had they to suffer by it?) and waved with their thin arms a mute adieu to people who were putting on cloaks and shawls, and scarcely looked at them at all. It is as though Nature should send us ancient butterflies with faded down in the late autumn. In future, when we go to the play, my friends, let us always keep a “brava” and a clap of the white gloves for the Last Scene of All.

Saddened by this sight, yet not so sad but that

we felt we could eat supper, we left the G. B. T. with that good end in view, when, behold, the winter sky to southward one dull glare of red, and every other word that we heard spoken in the streets was "Fire! Fire!" At that sound, I thought with a shudder of the atmosphere of blinding light and intense heat (and yet with draughts which would have smitten flame to frenzy) in the place we had just left; of the hundreds of flickering gas-jets; of the pasteboard scenes that would be touch-wood to every tongue of fire; of the gauze and gossamer garments, scathed at a flash along with those they clothed; of the iron frame upon which those helpless beauties might have been offered up to Moloch in that valley of Tophet from which we had just emerged—I had almost said escaped. "Where *is* the fire?" asked we. And each hurrying passenger, bound for the same spot, but with his own peculiar notion of where it was, gave us a different reply. "The Houses of Parliament!" "Westminster Abbey!" "The Archbishop's Palace at Lambeth"—while one old gentleman who

had supped freely, and forgotten the points of the compass, replied : "The Br—ish Museum, sir." At last we came upon a fireman's station, where the engine was being got ready in hot speed, and learned where the fire really was.

It was at the Surrey Theatre !

CHAPTER XX.

AT THE DOG-SHOW.

THAT half the world does not know how the other half lives, was wont to be a true saying, although but a partial truth. It might have been added, that it was likewise ignorant of the feelings, passions, ambitions, and even the amusements of the other half. A certain tulip affords not only pleasure to A, but excites him to a sort of frenzy ; he would give a quarter of his whole possessions to become the owner of an ill-smelling painted Jezebel of a flower, no other specimen of which, he is well assured, is in the collection of any rival tulip-fancier. The rest of the human alphabet used to stand aghast at A's infatuation. To B, whose entire existence, except the six weeks which

are out of the season, and when he cannot "get up a fourth" in all London, is spent in playing with grotesquely executed pieces of cardboard, and who founds his claim to religion and morality upon the ground that he desists from playing whist exactly as the clock strikes twelve upon Saturday nights, A's course of conduct was unintelligible; he had known persons to have weaknesses for particular suits, like Mrs. Sarah Battle, and even for particular cards, such as the Queen of Clubs, who does indeed carry a flower in her hand—but for tulips! Could any one imagine a more frivolous and senseless taste? C, who has enough money to maintain himself and family in comfort and even luxury, and who would scorn to increase his capital by trade, finds all the interest of life centred in a horse-race; he bets heavily upon animals about which he knows nothing for certain, except that their owners are not to be trusted, and believes that there is no joy in this world comparable to that of overreaching a friend. C, I say, was wont to look with the utmost contempt on D, who

only cares for horses in respect to their capabilities of carrying him after hounds, and looks upon summer as an error in judgment on the part of Providence, insomuch as it affords no fox-hunting. E, who spends his spare time in thoughtful study upon the construction of some machine which shall destroy his fellow-creatures in the most unforeseen manner possible, by falling upon them from the skies, or bursting out upon them from under their feet, and whose idea of perfection is "the greatest destruction of the greatest number," used to conceive F to be little less than a brute, because he never misses a prize-fight, and his money is always ready at the *Cat and Cauliflower*, in the cause of Science and the National Manliness. Similarly, G and the rest of us were wont to have some particular delight or hobby which was "*caviare* to the general;" a clique more or less limited sympathised with us, and a palisade more or less confined enclosed us, over which we gazed, indifferent-eyed, at the pursuits of the world.

Now it is one of the specialties of Society, on the

other hand, and no insignificant evidence of its liberality and large-heartedness, that it has a desire to be informed about itself. Not only is the upper crust anxious to know how the under crust gets on, and despatches its missionaries, its Mayhews, and its Amateur Casual, and institutes its Social Science Association, and resolves itself into special commissions for that end, but the various cliques and coteries we have spoken of begin to evince an interest in that social body which they go to make up, and the social body in them. There is an inclination on the part of those within to lower their palisade, and on the part of those without to look over it, and see what is going on.

Virtuosi who have spent tens of thousands upon the most hideous productions of the ceramic art; upon clumsy jewellery of six centuries ago; upon ivory idols from the far ends of the universe; and who were wont to keep these things as jealously as the Turk his harem, are now as desirous of getting their goods appreciated as though they were marine store-dealers. Cognoscenti who used to pride

themselves upon their exclusiveness, now "loan" those mysterious treasures for public exhibition which were wont to be shewn as a favour only to their dearest friends, and then only for the sake of exciting their envy. Possessors of paintings that a few years ago would have been covered with a curtain, and exposed only on great occasions, like relics, to a few devotees of the Fine Arts, despatch them now to galleries, to which the most ignorant may gain admittance daily for sixpence, and which the humblest may enter on Wednesdays and Saturdays for nothing at all. Associations, archæological and scientific, whose nebulous "proceedings" used to take place in dusty chambers, as far as possible removed from the ordinary world, hold open meetings, and attract to themselves excursion-trains at reduced prices. Chess-clubs, whose meditative doings were wont to be as secret as those of the Star Chamber, now play in our town-halls, and, for the additional gratification of the populace, incorporate a sort of blind-man's-buff with their time-honoured science. Flower-fanciers entice

fox-hunters to their rose-shows. Agriculturists, who were formerly supposed to have a monopoly of the organ of wonder, attract the entire metropolis to gaze at their long-horns and their short-horns, their shearlings and their yearlings.

The whole fashionable world, male, and not a few of its female members, emigrated to Battersea Park the other day to see, and even to feel. It was considered a sign of ignorance not to knead and pinch the regions about the tails of the fat cattle. The ladies, who imagined, I think, that the objects of their attentions were personally gratified by this process, indented the animals with the points of their parasols. They gazed with interest upon "Little Wonder"—the fattest pig in the world, I should suppose—and expressed a tender pity that he should have been disqualified for a prize on account of his teeth.*

* These were certainly in a melancholy condition, but the objection lay in his advanced age, which his teeth too positively indicated. With respect to pigs, by-the-by, it was observed in my hearing by more than one fashionable visitor, that the fatter the pigs were the less hair they had,

The most remarkable thing in this great collection, perhaps, was an empty compartment, labelled "Pen of Three Females," which attracted great attention. I myself being interested in literature, was particularly curious about this, expecting to behold the writing implement which had been used in turn by some female triumvirate of letters—Hypatia, Hannah More, and Miss Martineau, perhaps—but there was nothing but space and straw. The precious relic, if there was one, had been unaccountably removed before my visit. The most strenuous efforts were however made by all to understand what there was really to be seen, and if we did not succeed, we deserved to do so.

This creditable desire for knowledge on the part of Society at Battersea was, however, quite eclipsed

and therefore the more obtrusively pink were their complexions. A question therefore arises, which may never have occurred to the agricultural mind by reason of its familiarity with this phenomenon: Is there, then, only a certain amount of hairs provided for each pig, so that the greater its superficies, the more sparse the hairs? "We pause for a reply."

by its enthusiasm during the same week at Islington. The former is a locality which the aristocracy are unquestionably less accustomed to visit than the Second Cataract of the Nile, but the latter is a *terra incognita* indeed. It is not too much to say, that a greater number of English people of fashion have surveyed St. Peter's at Rome than have ever set eyes on, far less partaken of refreshments at, the Angel at Islington. Yet, cabinet ministers and their wives, and bishops (not of Bond Street), and hundreds of ladies and gentlemen of title and high degree, betook themselves, in a certain week in June, to this unknown district, in order to see a Dog-show.

The Islington Agricultural Hall, in which this exhibition was held, is, as regards the exterior, of a doubtful style of architecture; but the interior is of that Transition period when people began to build roofs over their stables, but had not as yet divided them into stalls. More than a thousand dogs of all descriptions—Sporting, Toy, Fancy, Fighting, and Foreign—were assembled here, the smaller in little

detached dwellings of their own, and the larger on couches of straw, with no restriction as to space save that imposed by the length of their chains. The cleanliness of these creatures was beyond all praise, but yet there was a certain aroma about them—*extrait de canaille*, let us call it—which brought out Society's scent-bottles; while, as for the noise, we can well believe that the singers in the Philharmonic Concert Rooms over the way *did* find the canine rivalry a little trying. Lablache himself could never have got lower than the Alpine mastiff, whose bell-bass was incessant; nor could the singer of highest note in the vocal scale have beaten, in respect to shrillness at least, the white terriers. A couple of these, in particular, "Highly Commended" by the judges, but apparently far from satisfied with that award, never ceased, with red eyes and quavering voice, to impugn the justice of the decree which had deprived them of a silver medal. Aristocratically contemptuous of such complainers lay the King Charles's spaniels, each upon its little cushion, and with

scarlet ribbons in its jet-black hair. They seemed to know that the race is getting as scarce as old Port, and that the prices set on their silky heads ranged from ten to seventy guineas. These, in common with the majority of the dogs exhibited, were *bonâ fide* for sale; but where such sums as £1500, and even £2000, were affixed to any animal in the catalogue, it might be concluded that the owner did not wish to part with his canine favourite. Such unexpectedly large prices were, however, given in some cases, that the owners were obliged to part with what they had no intention of selling—the fancy price they had put on their property being insufficient to keep it in their own possession.

Scarcely less delicate than the King Charleses were the Maltese dogs, white door-mats for my lady's boudoir, and with only an exquisite pink nose-tip to proclaim them dogs at all. Some of these dainty ones were even in glass-cases—looking rather stuffed—and one had her family-tree planted at her door, so that all might be aware of

her lofty lineage. She was the granddaughter of Rose, the most luxuriant-coated lady-dog ever known in England, whose tresses were thirteen and a half inches in length. In curious contrast to these were their insufficiently clothed neighbours, the toy-terriers, who wore their gossamer chains with much impatience, and strove to bite off the very tickets that proclaimed their triumphs: some of these were shivering like half an aspen leaf, and occasionally emitting a Liliputian snap, like the closing of a *portemonnaie*. The pug-dogs, very deficient in nose, and with the rest of their features (to say the least) very much foreshortened, also kept up a continuous duodecimo snarl; they looked as if they had failed in becoming bull-dogs—just as the critics are said to be disappointed authors—and their tempers perhaps were soured by that circumstance.

The foreign dogs—among which I discovered a Scotch collie, much disgusted with his company—were for the most part rather a sad sight. There were some Pekin dogs, who appeared to regret

that they had ever been littered, or had not gone the way of all dogs in their native country in early youth, and been served up at mandarins' tables. The poodles, too, shivered miserably in the cold shade of the English aristocracy ; and the Egyptian dogs—half rat and half Italian greyhound—were a piteous spectacle. The former were “got up” as well as their circumstances would permit ; what little hair they had was combed and *comme il faut*—taken assiduous care of, as is the hair of the human when he first perceives that he is getting bald ; but the dogs of Egypt had absolutely *no* hair, while their complexion was of that dead blue which a gentleman's upper lip presents immediately after shaving. It may have been my insular prejudice, but the Russian retrievers, handsome dogs though they were, seemed to present the same keen, cowed expression that is often observable in their masters ; while the French sporting-dog betrayed at once the inaptitude of our Gallic neighbours for *le Sport*. I am certain that the pointers at least had been accustomed to con-

sider tomtits as game. There were numbers of some nameless extra-foreign classes upon whose ancestors it would have puzzled Mr. Darwin himself to pronounce for certain, but all seemed to occupy themselves very agreeably in catching flies—and other insects.

Of a very different sort from these were the great St. Bernards, the philosophers of the canine world, in whose thoughtful faces and vast limbs its intellect and dignity are most united. Not even the massive Alpine mastiffs gave such assurance of a dog as these, nor the huge boar-hounds, almost as terrible and truculent as the game they pursue. Most of these mighty creatures were dumb—too disdainful to complain of their captivity at the hands of man—but ever and anon they poured forth an awful note of lamentation, not for themselves, as it seemed, but for the humiliation of the species over which they felt themselves to reign in vain. The Prometheus bound might have expressed himself to the same effect against the gods. One of these St. Bernards

might be bought—although it seemed profanation to barter so noble a creature—for a hundred pounds; but the affixed price would be in reality far less than the actual expense, for the best dogs are certain to be often stolen if their purchasers live in town, and to cost from two pounds to ten for each recovery. The adventures of ladies and gentlemen of fashion after their lost dogs might be published appropriately enough under the title of *The Wilds of Whitechapel*.

The deer-hounds* moaned, and even barked as they slept, hunting, doubtless, in their dreams, upon the heathery hills. It must have been sad for Gelert (two grand dogs were so named), with his heart in the Highlands, to wake and find his body in Islington. The offspring of this species, so beautiful in maturity, are as ungainly in early youth as calves or cygnets, nor did the majority of the canine puppies exhibited give promise of

* There were two smooth-coated deer-hounds, a very rare kind, specimens of which, I believe, are only to be found in Eastwell Park, where they are used for separating the deer from the herd.

future good looks; the young of King Charles's breed, on the other hand, looked every inch (though their inches were few) a prince or princess, and those of the Newfoundlands were perfect miniatures of papa and mamma.

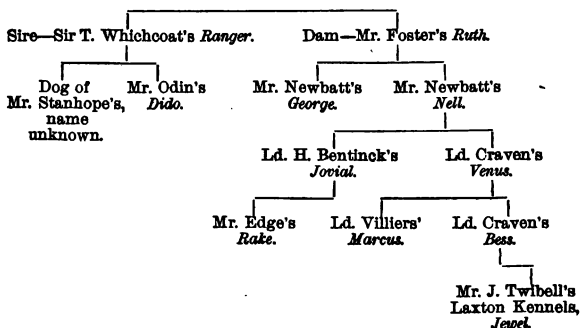
It is not too much to say, that very few human Sovereigns have ever looked so majestic as did the blood-hounds. These are unquestionably the hereditary aristocracy of the canine race, and their impassive magnificence is just what the folks who are anxious to appear "well connected" are always striving after. They are not very intellectual, indeed; but then there is no necessity for it. Nature has set her coroneted seal upon them (which she sometimes omits to do with the biped), and no one disputes their title to Nobility, although the bull-dog may of course turn up his democratic nose at the Institution itself as much as he pleases. Each blood-hound looked as if he had gained the first prize, and was sitting to Sir Edwin Landseer for his portrait, at the especial request of her Majesty Queen Victoria. Their play, if their

mutual condescensions can be called by so light a name, was as that of lions; and once or twice there burst forth a terrible sound from their massive jaws, such as the hunted slave in the Dismal Swamp has often shuddered to hear, and the echo of which has startled the Recording Angel, accustomed as he is to the vindictive cruelty and unnatural avarice of Man.

The twenty couple of fox-hounds belonging to the Duke of Beaufort had, of course, no price set on them; they were priceless: their owner even refused the prize awarded, because there were no competitors. If a Frenchman could possibly be taught to understand such things, he would have beheld in that miniature kennel the finest specimens of the sporting-dog that exist. Nature and art combined in them to produce all excellences—speed, endurance, tone, sagacity, delicacy of smell, unanimity, beauty. More care, more money, more labour had been expended on the bringing up of these dogs than on the nurture and education (alas!) of half the people who would fill that

exhibition on its shilling-days. What an idea of the importance of sporting-dogs in England would the following pedigree (extracted from the pages of this catalogue) of a mere pointer afford to a foreigner:—

Exhibitor: W. G. T. Newton, Esq., Ranceby Lodge, Sleaford, Lincolnshire. Breeder: T. H. Foster, Esq., Sleaford. *Ranger*. Age 3 years 11 months. £1000.



Conceive the astonishment of this ancestral animal if he could be informed that there are countries so savage and uncivilised that they possess no game-laws!

The little creatures with their hair combed over their eyes, whose uniformity of appearance at both extremities suggested the famous inquiry of the street-boy : " Vich is 'is 'ed, and vich is 'is tail ?" were, of course, Skye terriers ; and the much larger dogs, looking very much ashamed of themselves, as filling an unrecognised and amphibious position—half-land, half-water dog—were otter-dogs, the Marines of the canine army. There was a very large show of mastiffs, so quiet and sleepy, to all appearance, that it was hard to suppose such creatures delighted in combat. One very fine one, of indomitable pluck and vigour, was entitled *Quaker*—in compliment, no doubt, to the member for Birmingham. About the bull-dogs, however, there could be no mistake as to their mission in the world. Fighting was evidently what they were born for, and a profession in which their business and pleasure were happily mixed. Their resemblance to fighting-men—to the bullet-headed, short-nosed, low-browed, evil-eyed individuals who belong to what is called (by a hideous misnomer)

the "Fancy," was most striking, and seems to confirm the doctrine of metempsychosis beyond contradiction. One or two of them had even black eyes. A female bull-terrier, with pups, quite failed to convey the expression of tenderness which the pleasures of maternity are said to imprint upon the countenances of the very lowest of her sex. The pups, also, were black, which, when considered with the fact that the legitimate husband was no more than whity-brown, placed the lady's morality and taste upon an equally low level.

It was quite a relief to leave this vulgar company, and to go up stairs, as it were, into the drawing-room, where the graceful greyhounds, clothed though they were, were uttering small-talk against the unseasonable cold, and the retrievers were handing about their drinking-mugs to everybody (for practice), as though at a kettledrum. The timid setters, with beseeching eyes, were here too, and the spaniels wishing to make friends with anybody, and the glorious Newfoundlands, full of

magnificent good-nature, and surrounded by admiring young people, whom they welcomed by "giving paw." The superiority of expression was certainly with this last species, with the St. Bernards, and with the blood-hounds; next in intelligence came the sporting-dogs; then the "varmint" creatures, whose thoughts run on rats and badgers; then the pet and fancy classes; and lastly, the fighting-dogs, with their blood-shot eyes fixed longingly upon the spectator's under-lip.

Upon the whole, the Islington Exhibition was a most interesting one, and the dog-fanciers have established their claim to some consideration. Whitechapel and Belgravia have for the first time shaken hands. It is no little credit to the managers of the undertaking, that a thousand dogs should have been collected together, and accommodated so conveniently both for themselves and the public. This enormous raw material for hydrophobia has been dismissed without any occurrence of that malady; but if the evil had not been averted, it would certainly not have been for any want of such deterrent

and remedial agents as bark and whine, a supply of which each animal was expected to bring with him—and did it.

CHAPTER XXI.

A MORAL LESSON FROM THE OLD BAILEY.

ON February 22, 1864, there was offered to the population of London a gratuitous spectacle such as they had not witnessed for more than a quarter of a century ; a sensation scene surpassing all that has been done at all the theatres, and all that has been written by all the novelists. It was therefore absolutely necessary that this Home Correspondent should behold it with his own eyes. This is his excuse, if he needs one, for going to see five of his fellow-creatures hurried from life to death, and he mentions it now for good and all, having applied it so constantly, both before and since, to his own conscience, that he doubts whether it will bear further handling.

And yet, if a public execution be a Moral Lesson, as I am assured it is, why should not I have derived my benefit from it as well as others, so excellent an opportunity being afforded ? Or why should the most sensitive reader be otherwise than gratified by the recital of what was intended to do him, in common with his fellows, good ? Its object was, as I understand, to deter from the crime of murder, and unless the sensitive reader has already committed that offence (which happens occasionally to persons of his temperament), I trust I may not be writing for him in vain.

A week before this unwonted exhibition took place, the rents of rooms in the vicinity of the Old Bailey, albeit by no means a fashionable locality, rose fabulously high ; and although I did hear of a gentleman of great intelligence hiring a convenient chamber at an ordinary rate for six months, with no other object than to occupy it upon the night of the 21st, I am inclined to think he met with some householder exceptionally simple. Ten days, at all events, before the elevating ceremony took place,

I can certify that he would have miserably failed in making any such bargain. Being unaccustomed to commercial transactions, and also excessively ashamed of the particular one I had in contemplation, I called on a friend in the City, and took him out with me, upon the pretence of wishing to know the exact spot at which these unfortunate creatures were to suffer: since to have secured a back-room even at a reasonable rate, looking out the wrong way, would have been foolish, although, I confess, a time did subsequently arrive when I should have been glad had such a mistake been made.

My City friend was very communicative, but grossly ignorant, so that it was difficult to make him understand why I stepped into a shop opposite Newgate, and put the same inquiry to the owner which he himself had so particularly answered.

“Upon the roof of the jail, at the north-west angle by those spikes,” had been the information

given by my friend, as to the precise locality of the exhibition.

"Across the road there, in the street, and just outside the Debtor's Door," was the reply of the shopman, accompanied by much appropriate action, and even enthusiasm.

"Oh, indeed," said I, feigning unconcern; "and I daresay that people let out rooms from which to see it, don't they?"

"I should just think they did," observed the citizen rather contemptuously. "Why, they often clears their yearly rent in a single night."

"Do you happen to know of any good room, yourself?" inquired I carelessly.

"Good room!" answered the householder, snapping like a pike at a trimmer; "the most excellent apartments upstairs in all the Bailey."

"Then let us see them," said I cheerfully, with a nod to my unconscious friend, as though I would say, "This is rather curious, so far as it goes."

"He thinks you're in earnest," whispered my

companion craftily. "He thinks you are one of those morbid wretches who actually *do* come to see such scenes."

The householder led the way up a wretched staircase, so dark that I did not know a dog had flown at me, until it caught hold of my trousers; and of such an evil odour as I have not often smelled.

"My good friend," cried I, "it appears to me that your house is small; I don't think that it is worth while to trouble you. Five other gentlemen wish to occupy the apartment as well as myself."

"There is accommodation for sixteen in my first-floor room here," exclaimed the proprietor; "there have been twenty-two before now, and never were more comfortable."

He threw open a door on the left hand, and a stream of light, accompanied with very bad air, revealed to us the apartment in question. A moderate-sized bedroom, anything but clean, with one window, unopened, as I should think, since

the last execution in the autumn ; and so incrustated with dirt, that it might have looked out upon Lake Windermere, for all that I could see to the contrary.

“ You can have this to-day for ten guineas,” continued the proprietor, with the air of a man bestowing a favour ; “ to-morrow, it will be eleven ; and so on until the 21st, when I shall charge forty pounds for it. The next day, after nine o’clock, it will be only seven-and-sixpence a week. There’s a gentleman in the Guards about it now ; he’s pretty sure to take it, but I told him it couldn’t be kept. I think he’s in the Blues.”

“ If he takes it,” thought I, looking round upon the wretched apartment, “ he will be most certainly in the blues ;” and then I thought of those gentlemen in the same regiment, mentioned by Thomas Ingoldsby—“ Lieutenant Tregooze and Sir Carnaby Jenks of the Blues”—who, in company with Lord Tomnoddy, “ all came to see a man die in his shoes,” at that very place where I now stood. What a wicked, heartless crew I had

often thought them to be ; they drank champagne (dear ! dear !) ; they played at cards, perhaps (if one can conceive such a thing !) ; and then fell asleep before the fatal hour, and never beheld what they had come to see.

“ Sir Carnaby Jenks of the Blues,” murmured I, reflectively, flattening my nose against the window-pane, and making upon it thereby a little circle quite transparent.

“ Ay,” observed the proprietor with animation, “ that was the very name of the gentleman, now I recollect. He will be sure to take this room, if you object.”

“ Very well,” said I, with a mendacity scarcely inferior to his own, “ I’ll think about it, and let you know.”

Then my commercial friend and I, in deadly terror of the dog, descended the stairs, and emerged with thankfulness into what was, by comparison, the fresh air of heaven.

“ Here is a better house next door,” observed I ; “ I shall look at the rooms there. Come along.”

"Stop!" cried my friend; "I suspect you are in horrid earnest. Can you seriously contemplate"——

"My dear friend," interrupted I, repeating a formula which I had long ago arranged for such an occasion, "the exigencies of my profession compel me to do many things, and to frequent many places which, as a private individual, I should shun."

"But you talked of taking five other persons—more wicked than yourself, since they have not this rag of an excuse."

"My dear sir," said I, "it is a Moral Lesson; I have heard you call it so yourself. I am instructed to pay as high as £2 15s. a head for it, refreshments not included. Shall I secure extra accommodation, with a view to your joining our little party?"

My commercial friend looked to left and right, to be sure that nobody had overheard this infamous proposal, and with a shake of the head, expressive of disgust and denial, fled eastward to the homes

of scrip and share, with his habitually low opinion of the literary profession sunk to zero.

But he had done for me what I wanted. The ice of my self-respect was sufficiently broken to enable me to enter the second house, without a blush, and to make arrangements for our accommodation upon the night of the 21st, with all the coolness of a Paterfamilias sent on to Margate in advance to secure furnished apartments for his wife and the dear children. I think I should do my second proprietor no wrong if I set him down as an amateur pugilist. Fortune had raised him above the necessity of personal combat, but nature had eminently qualified him for that profession, and with its principal members he was hand and (boxing) glove. He was small, but wiry; cool, but determined; and he "came up smiling" upon all occasions—even when we rang the bell for tea, a demand apparently unusual in those latitudes.

The bargain being struck, I made a speech which I thought not only conciliatory but friendly, and

which really involved not a little shock to what remained of my sense of respectability.

"In order," said I, "to convince you of the genuineness of my offer, I will leave you this card (only don't stick it on your mantel-piece), with my name and address upon it."

"You will certainly do that, sir," returned he, with an admirable coolness; "but it is indispensable that you should leave a deposit as well."

I had, it seemed, rather over-estimated the effect of my frank and genial manners (which are proverbial) upon this exceedingly practical man.

It was agreed among our party, that, admirable as were the arrangements for our comfort in this hired chamber, it would be as well to keep out of it to the very last moment consistent with our being able to get through the expected crowd; some time after midnight was therefore appointed for the trysting hour; and one gentleman, justly famous for his hospitality, asked me to take supper with him at his club, the *Cenotaph*, immediately before commencing our hideous vigil.

"That is rather late to get supper for a non-member, is it not?" inquired I. "Are you sure I shall get it?"

"My friend," replied he with emotion, "did I ever deceive you—at least with respect to food?"

I was touched by this appeal, and said no more; but when we entered the state dining-chamber of that somewhat oppressive club at eleven P.M., and I perceived it to be empty save for one ghostly waiter, and sunk in depths of gloom, my spirit quailed within me, and I well knew what was coming—and what was not.

"Prepare this table," quoth my host in a majestic voice, and pointing to the clothless mahogany.

"That gentleman is not a member of the club, I think," hazarded the ghostly waiter.

"It is all right," responded my entertainer loftily; "his eminent name has been put down hours ago."

"But after nine o'clock, sir, it is contrary to the regulations——"

I waited to hear no more, not wishing to behold the degradation of my friend, but rose and left the establishment. He presently came out to me, as I was partaking of the hospitality of the *Cenotaph* by sitting on its doorstep, and whispered hoarsely : “ There is *Epitaux*, there is the *Café de l’Europe*, there are a hundred places where we can get a better supper : the suppers are not good here. *Allons.*”

Alas, it was past eleven, and not a lawful day : *Epitaux* was shut, and the *Café*. Everything was shut except the horrid oyster-shops.

Has my sensitive reader ever tasted oysters with water or ginger-beer as accompaniments, instead of the usual liquids ? After eleven P.M., no spritual drinks, as we were informed, and no malt liquors, were procurable. What privations do the lower classes undergo, undreamed of by such persons as keep cellars !

After this hideous repast, we sallied forth in a very depressed condition, to receive our Moral Lesson. This was not the case, however, with

most persons whom we overtook, bound evidently upon the same instructive errand. In knots of twos and threes, with gibe and jest, the few pedestrians in the streets that night had all their faces set towards the east and Newgate, as though on pleasure bent. Cabs, too, were stopping in Ludgate Hill, out of which their occupants had stepped, to take one look at the preparations for to-morrow's tragedy. The whole of the Old Bailey, and far away into Giltspur Street, and wheresoever a street-view of what was to happen could be obtained, were crossed and recrossed by massive barriers,* like a gigantic cattle-market. A mighty throng already occupied the space immediately in front of the Debtors' Door, and the hoarse roar of their voices mingled with the dull strokes of the hammers of the workmen, whose labours were yet unfinished. To force our way through this dense multitude, would evidently be a matter of difficulty, though we did not know, at that time, of its danger; and we were glad of the guidance

* It is said that the cost of erecting these exceeded £1000.

of a policeman, who led us by Seacoal Lane, and through certain most objectionable alleys, into our hired house by unchoked ways.

The rest of our party had already arrived, and were looking out through the open windows upon the scene below. The prison, standing black in the clear frosty night, with the five wretchedest creatures in the world hidden somewhere in its stony bosom; and the cleared space, where the deed was to be done, making still more dense the crowd that hung about it, and pushed, and clung, and battled even then to glance into its threatening void. Closer and closer with every minute grew the throng, and more and more extended its limits; and louder and louder swelled the roar of tongues, broken by bursts of savage quarrel, or ribald mirth, but never for an instant sinking into silence. All things shone bright and clear in the moonbeams, save the gathering mob, who overspread the space like one great pall, save here and there where fitful spurts of light leaped up and left it darker than before. This was simply caused by the light-

ing of their pipes, the only physical comfort of these hardy watchers through the frosty night; nor did daylight bring them food or drink of any sort, for the public-houses dared not open to such a lawless mob.

Now, one of the advantages held forth by our esteemed proprietor as a reason for our patronage was this, that not only could he treat us with every consideration within doors (and most civil and obliging he was, I am bound to say), but that he would accompany such of our number as desired it to behold the humours of the crowd without. "I shall be happy," said he, "to go with you *upon the prowl*."

This phrase delighted me above measure, as being the fittest that could possibly have been invented for such an occasion, and I anticipated much satisfaction from the promised tour. But being a student of human nature, and having scanned the features of the company below with considerable attention, when the hour arrived for the expedition, and our guide, philosopher, and

friend came up to say he was ready, I expressed my opinion that it was better we should go forth only by pairs, and that I, for my part, would wait to make one of the last pair—or even longer. Two of the party, however, dressed in the height of fashion, dauntless by nature, and their courage animated (although by no means unduly) by cold chickens and champagne, voluteered at once, with enthusiasm. Their moleskin waistcoats, their light great-coats with velvet collars, their five-and-twenty shilling hats, their attenuated silk umbrellas, would have given them a very distinguished appearance anywhere, but especially in the Old Bailey at one P.M. “I think, gentlemen, that you had better leave your watches and money,” observed the proprietor, delicately, “also your scarf-pins, and indeed anything you particularly value; for nine-tenths of the people outside here—at the very least—are thieves.”

With these slight precautions our friends departed, radiant, *on the prowl*. In ten minutes, or fifteen at most, they returned, dishevelled,

ragged, hatless. "I had six thieves' hands in my pockets all at once," said one. They had been hustled, bonneted, held up and rifled, like a baby which has its little nose blown *vi et armis*. The Moral Lesson itself might possibly set matters right, but the fore-shadowing of its approach had certainly had marvellously little effect upon the pupils. No less than six individuals—gentlemen they were called, in contradistinction to their despoilers—fled into our house that very night, as into a haven, robbed, spitefully intreated, and even in terror for their lives. All hatless, too. The enmity of that mob towards a hat was something terrible to witness; if it had been the recognised symbol of Virtue, Morality, and Religion all in one, they could not have used it worse. "*Vigil*," who writes to the *Times* to say that the crowd were "deeply impressed," must have been one of the Bonneted, I think, and in that condition made his veracious observations. It is wonderful what a man will see (and not see) who has made up his mind beforehand, and is of a determined disposition.

At three o'clock, or thereabouts, there was heard a rumbling of some heavy carriage, and there broke forth a horrid yell, half cheer, half groan, from the people without. This was the arrival of the Scaffold, a solid block of wood (to all appearance), painted black, and drawn by three cart-horses. Then there ensued a horrid knocking, compared with which the knocking in *Macbeth* was but as the summons of a fashionable footman : they were putting up the Gallows.

By this time the snow had begun to fall, flake by flake, but without diminishing the concourse ; on the contrary, it grew and grew, so that the dawn presently broke upon a pavement of human heads extending as far as the eye could see.

- Hats, as I have said, were not permitted, and the effect of that sumptuary law was certainly picturesque. Those who had been deprived of their headgear had substituted for it particoloured handkerchiefs, while caps of every hue made the shifting scene like a pattern in a kaleidoscope. Bakers' white caps, soldiers' red caps, provident

persons' night-caps, and chimney-sweepers' black caps, were now become very numerous, and the mass of mere thieves and ruffians only leavened the multitude, instead of forming its sole constituents. The chimney-sweepers were extremely popular, and encouraged to beat one another, so that the soot should fly freely upon their neighbours; and the military were respected, so far, that I never saw one of them pushed up from the surging crowd, and rolled lengthways over the heads of the company, to which the members of all other professions were continually subjected. Many gentlemen of volatile dispositions (and of physical strength enough to insure impunity) would themselves leap upon the shoulders of those about them, and run along upon all-fours on the surface of the crowd; and nobody seemed to resent it, except now and then a personal friend, who seemed to consider it as a liberty, although perfectly allowable in the case of strangers, even though they included the softer sex.*

* I was informed by our polite proprietor, that upon the

I am sorry to say there were many women, although in no greater proportion to the males than one to ten. They were mostly young girls, who took no part in the rough amusements of their neighbours, unless under compulsion, but kept their gaze fixed on the Debtor's Door. One in particular, with roses in her bonnet, and cruel eyes, never looked anywhere else; she reminded me horribly of the girl in Bulwer's *Last Days of Pompeii*, who was so greedy to see the man devoured by the wild beast. No touch of pity or even of awe could be read in any countenance. When a black cloth, some two feet high, was placed round the edge of the scaffold, there was a yell of impotent rage, because a portion of the sight—the lowering of the dead bodies in their coffins—would be thereby lost to them. They cheered the hangman when he came out to adjust the ropes, as the herald of their coming treat; they grew impatient

last occasion of a Moral Lesson in the Old Bailey, a live rat was playfully let loose, and ran about the people's heads, unable to find any opening for its descent.

as the clock grew near the stroke of eight, and some called "Time." I am afraid an idea crossed my mind, that if all the people there present (except those at the windows) could be put out of the way, like those whose last agonies they had come to see, it would be no great loss. It is not eight, but it is very near. A little dog, in danger of being trodden to death, is rescued by the police, amid approbation, and placed in safety upon the pitching-block—where the porters rest their burdens—at the top of the street; that is a good sign; perhaps it is better to pity dogs than murderers. St. Sepulchre's bell begins to toll, although the inarticulate roar of voices almost drowns its solemn boom, and there is a sharp and sudden cry of "Hats off," and the parti-coloured carpet shows like a white sheet instantly. Where the barriers are *not*, in Newgate Street, the concourse bends and swells like the waves of a summer sea; and where the barriers are, they are only distinguishable by their living burdens. There is a dreadful thronging of officials

at the prison door, and five men are brought forth one after another to be strangled.

Let us turn our backs upon that scene, my friends, if you please, and look rather upon the forty thousand eager faces receiving their Moral Lesson. They are not so impressed that they are silent—no, not for one instant; but their roar has a certain purring satisfaction in it, like that of a cat over its prey. Then a hiss breaks forth, and here and there, the word “Cur” is heard; that is, because one of the wretched victims has fainted, and must needs be seated in a chair; and then there is a tempest of applause because the fifth man goes to his doom with as jaunty an air as his pinioned arms will permit. The priest is speaking the last few words that these wretches shall hear from mortal tongue; they are kissing (through those terrible caps) the crucifix he holds in his hand; and in a few seconds they will have crossed the threshold of life, and entered upon the mysteries of eternity. Surely, if the Moral Lesson is to give any visible sign of

its working, it must be now. It gives no sign whatever. The babblement never ceases; there is no hush, no reverence, no fear. Only after a certain dreadful grinding noise—which is the fall of the drop—a flood of uproar suddenly bursts forth, which must have been pent up before. This, the truth is, is the collective voice of the Curious, the Fast, the Vicious, spell-bound for a little by the awful spectacle; while the ceaseless, though lesser din arose from the professional scoundrels, the Thieves *in esse*, the Murderers *in posse*, who are impressed by nothing save by the touch of the fatal slip-knot under their own right ears. Singularly enough, the crowd increased after the execution; persons of delicate temperament, joining it, I suppose, who had not nerves enough for a Hanging, but who knew how to appreciate a Cutting Down.

The present writer has never been in favour of the abolition of capital punishments; *imprimis*, because

“Notwithstanding Human Nature’s purity,

He thinks they greatly add to his security;”

and in the second place, because his sympathies are (contrary, he knows, to what is usual) rather with the Murdered persons than with the people who kill them. Nothing that he beheld on the morning of the 22nd of February has shaken that opinion, which is entertained even more strongly by those of his companions who went out "upon the prow," and beheld face to face the class for whom hemp-seed grows. But with respect to the *publicity* of the Moral Lesson, this Home Correspondent believes it to be bad everyway, and opines that it should be abolished forthwith.

THE END.

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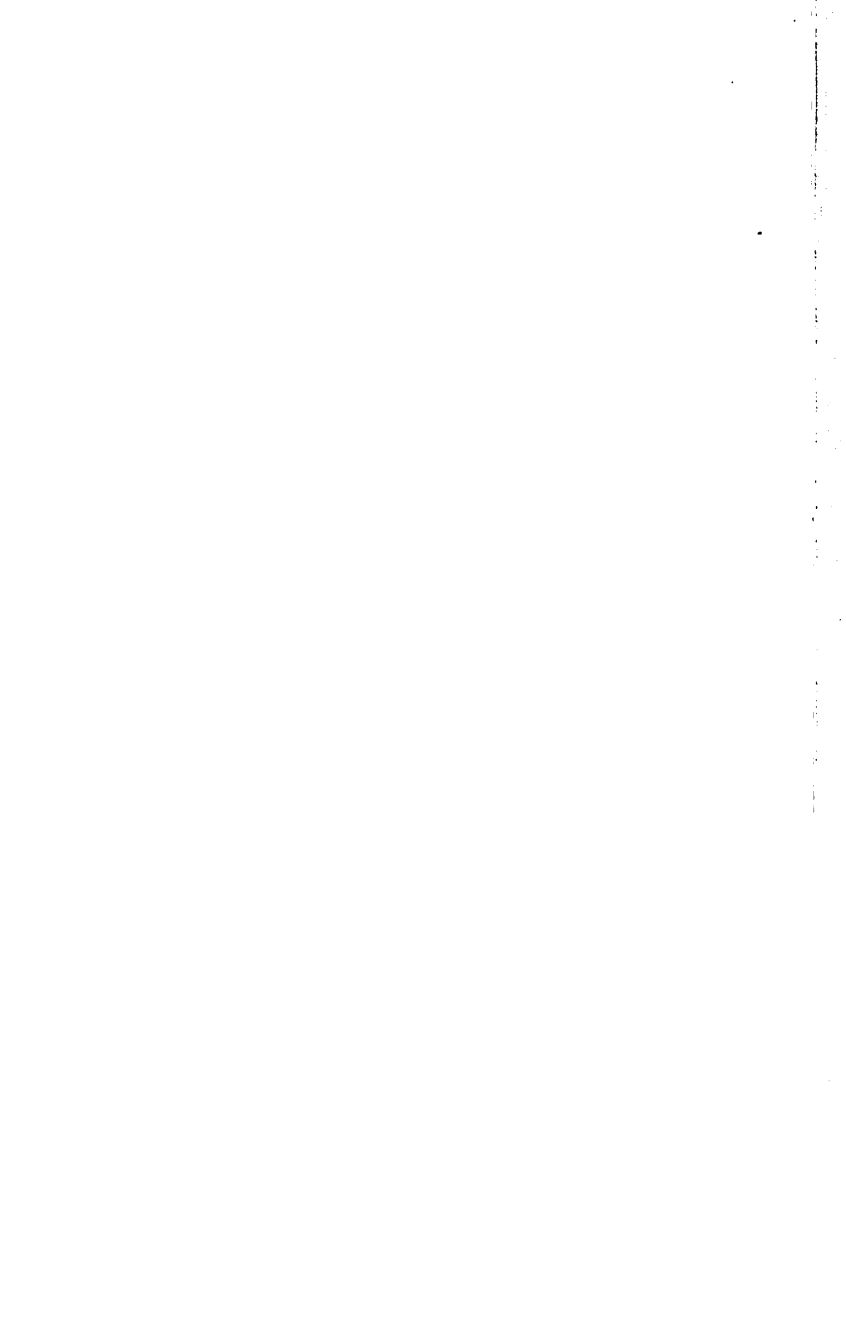
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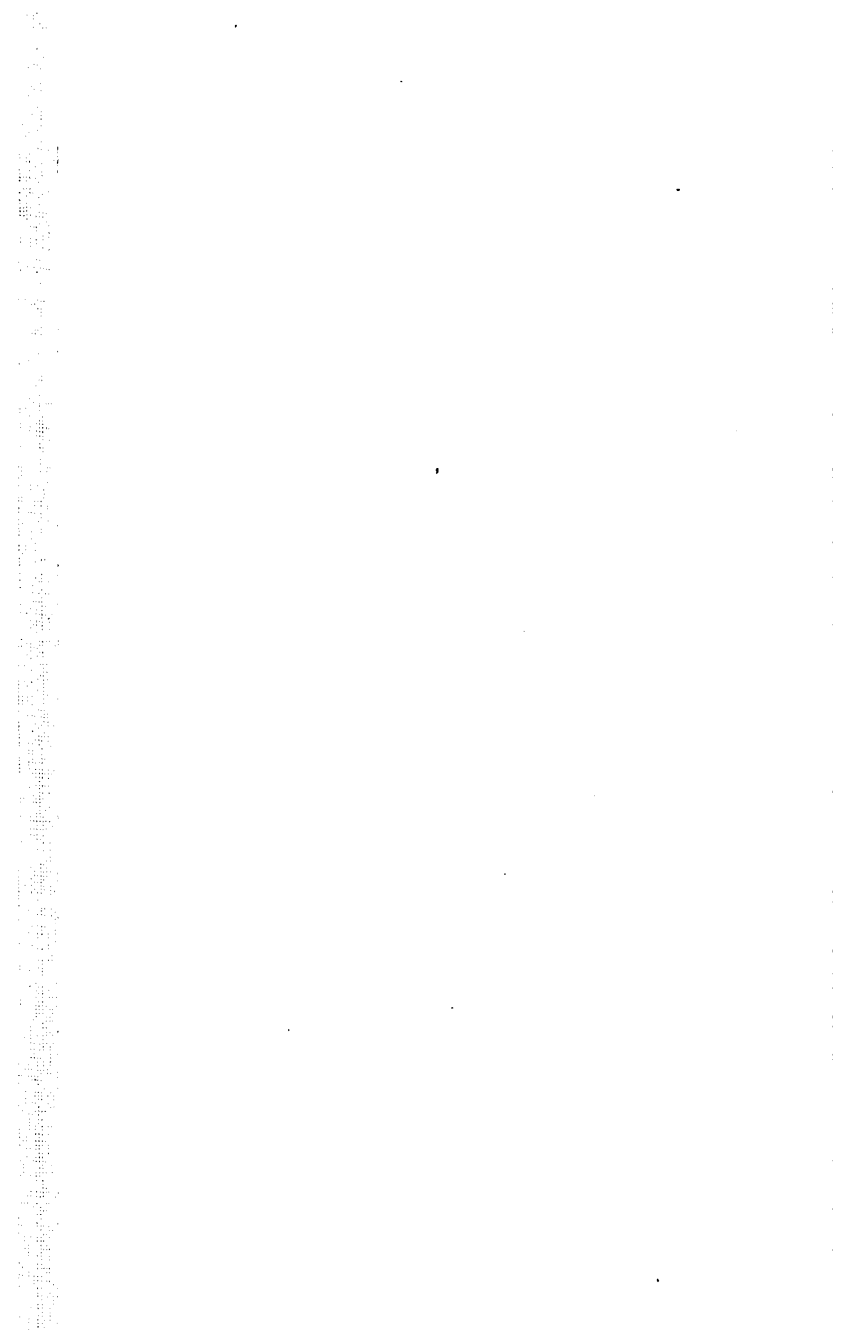
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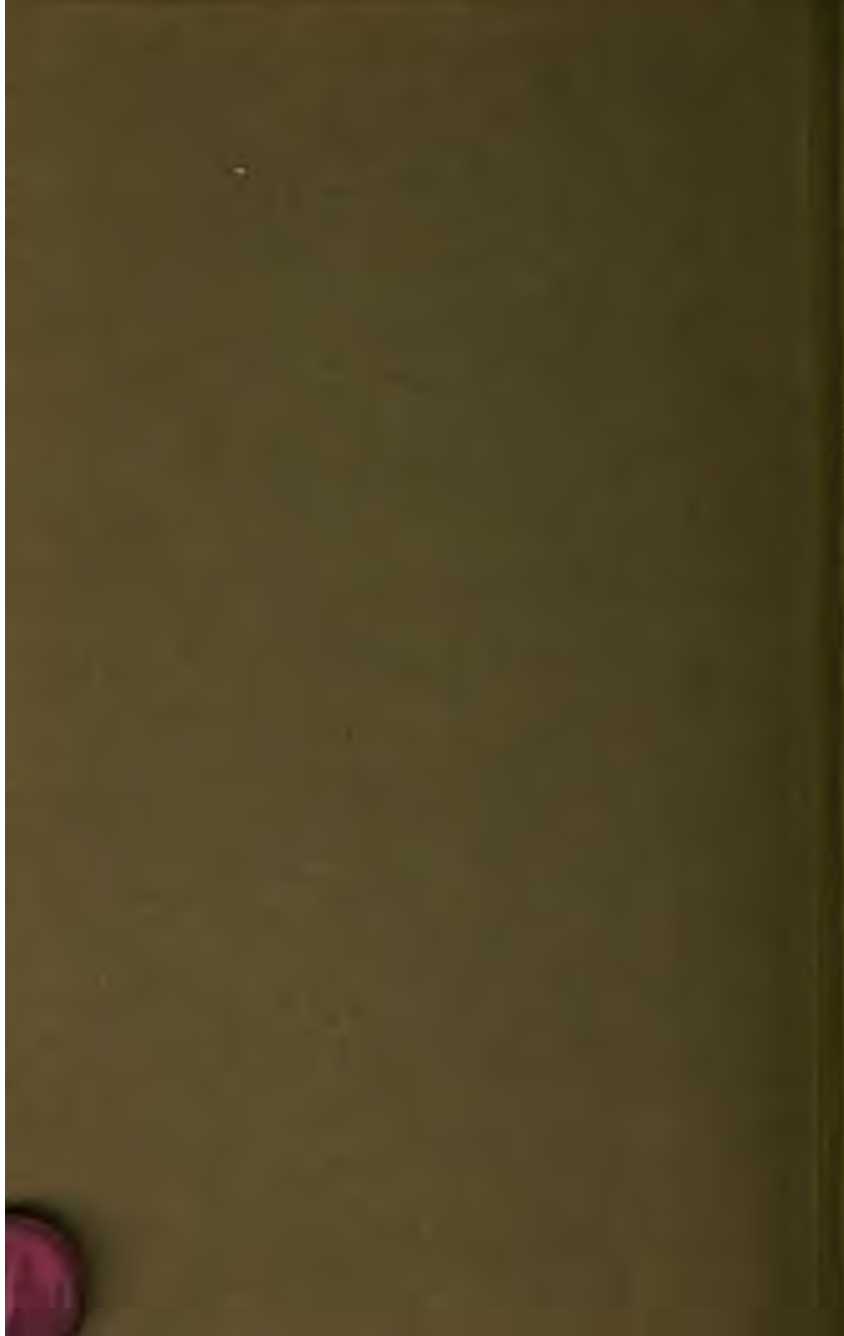
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